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ESSAYS IN ORDER



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ESSAYS IN ORDER

By

JACQUES MARITAIN
PETER WUST
CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

With a General Introduction by
CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

WESTERN civilisation to-day is passing through one of the most critical moments in its history. In every department of life traditional principles have been shaken and discredited, and we do not yet know what is going to take their place. There are those who hold that Europe has had her day and that our culture has entered the first stage of an inevitable process of decay, while others believe that we are only beginning to realise the possibilities of modern science and that we are about to see the rise of a new social order which will far transcend anything that the world has known. One thing is certain—the old order is dead; and with the old order there has passed away that traditional acceptance of the truth of Christianity and that general recognition of Christian moral principles, which even in the nineteenth century still retained so strong a hold on the minds of men.

It is the aim of the present series to attempt to face the problems which arise from this new situation and to examine the possibilities of co-operation and of conflict that exist between the Catholic order and the new world. It will not confine itself to any single aspect of the question, but will deal with general principles and with the

concrete problems of contemporary life. Indeed, it is impossible to limit the inquiry to any one field, since the present disorder and confusion of ideas shows itself in every department of thought—in literature and philosophy, no less than in sociology and ethics. Hence, it is clear that this series must be tentative and unsystematic in character. It cannot attempt to propound a definite solution or to embody a formal programme. For Catholicism has no *policy* nor can the Catholic compete with the Marxian Socialist in offering the modern world a panacea for its material ills. Yet it would be equally impossible to dismiss the problems of the modern world as though they had no meaning for those whose lives were based on the supernatural certitude of the Christian faith. The Puritan or the sectarian Christian can isolate himself from the age in which he lives and construct a private world in harmony with his religious convictions. But for the Catholic this should be impossible. Catholicism stands essentially for a universal order in which every good and every truth of the natural or the social order can find a place.

The disorder of the modern world is due either to the denial of the existence of spiritual reality or to the attempt to treat the spiritual order and the business of everyday life as two independent worlds which have no mutual relations. But while Catholicism recognises the distinction and the autonomy of the natural and the supernatural orders, it can never acquiesce in their segregation. The

spiritual and the eternal insert themselves into the world of sensible and temporal things, and there is not the smallest event in human life and social history but possesses an eternal and spiritual significance.

It is the Catholic ideal to order the whole of life towards unity, not by the denial and destruction of the natural human values, but by bringing them into living relation with spiritual truth and spiritual reality. But this can only be achieved if Catholics are prepared to make the necessary effort of moral sympathy and intellectual comprehension. If they remain passively content with their own possession of the truth, they do not, it is true, compromise the divine and indefectible life of the Church, but they prove false to their own temporal mission, since they leave the world and the society of which they form a part to perish.

As Maritain writes in the following essay: "It is certain that some good and some truth are immanent in the new temporal forms which are emerging from the obscure chrysalis of history, and that they manifest in some way the will of God, which is absent from nothing that exists. They may in the same way serve eternal interests on this earth." It is our business to understand all this, and in order to do so it is necessary to be equally on our guard against the weak acquiescence in current fashions of thought which would cause us to lose our grasp of the eternal principles and from that "narrowness of heart

which prevents us from knowing the work of man" and doing justice to the work of God in time and history.

Difficult as this task may be, there is, we believe, a greater opportunity for carrying it out than at any time during the last hundred years. The old barriers are falling, and though the destructive and negative tendencies in modern culture have destroyed much that was valuable in the traditions of the past, they have also swept away many of the inherited prejudices and fixed forms of thought which isolated the Catholic tradition from vital contact with the realities of modern life.

The present generation is intensely sensitive to the existence of a religious problem. It is true that the ordinary Englishman no longer goes to church and that his theological beliefs are so vague as to be practically non-existent. He does not take religion for granted, as he did in the last century, when church-going was a mark of social respectability and religion occupied a distinct and strictly limited place in the national life. But this is very largely due to a recognition of the unreality and narrowness of the old sectarian ideals. There is a justifiable reaction against a type of religion which imposed rigid restrictions on any kind of rational enjoyment, while it left men free to exploit one another and to make life hideous in the race for wealth. To-day men demand of religion that it should be in touch with realities, that it should offer some solu-

tion to the social and intellectual problems of the modern world and that it should be at the service of human needs, though at the same time they often fail to realise the absolute and transcendent element which is inseparable from any true religious ideal. Consequently, if the interest in religion is weaker to-day than in the last century, it is wider and more diffused. It has come out of the pulpit and the meeting-house into the columns of the daily Press and the programmes of the B.B.C. Both in England and America there is a constant stream of literature dealing with religion and the modern age and with the problems of Christianity in the light of modern knowledge.

Unfortunately, the greater part of this literature is of little positive value. It witnesses to a real need, but it provides no adequate solution. It is vitiated by a complete absence of philosophical principles and by a vague optimism which slurs over the real difficulties of the situation and offers good will as a substitute for clear thinking. In order to come to terms with the modern world it has jettisoned the theological traditions of Protestant orthodoxy, and it is left with nothing but moral ideals and social aspirations unsupported by any solid intellectual foundation. The writers of such literature can have neither sympathy nor understanding for Catholic thought. To them Catholicism seems entirely out of touch with the needs of the modern world. They regard it as a refuge for those shrinking souls who are unable to face reality, and its

philosophy as a relic of mediæval obscurantism. But in reality it is they themselves who are living in the past and who do not realise that a new age has begun. Just as the schoolmen of the seventeenth century went on discussing the problem of the fifth essence and the theories of Aristotelian cosmology when Galileo and Newton were creating their new physical synthesis, so to-day the representatives of modern religious thought continue to murmur their platitudes about the liberation of religion from dogma and the ethical genius of Christianity, when the world is turning away from subjectivism and idealism and once more seeks absolute standards and spiritual realities.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is true, the whole trend of Western civilisation was hostile to Catholicism. The absolutism and realism of Catholic philosophy was incomprehensible to an age which followed Rousseau and Kant, or Bentham and Herbert Spencer. When Pius IX. denied that it was the duty of the Church to come to terms with Liberalism and Progress and Modern Civilisation, his pronouncement was greeted with a chorus of execration from every country in Europe. It seemed as though the Papacy was pronouncing its own sentence of death, for the triumph of material progress seemed inevitable and no one could conceive the possibility of its failure.¹

¹ Cf. Maritain, *The Things That Are Not Cæsar's*, App. V., "On Liberalism."

To-day all this is changed—Liberalism and Progress and Modern Civilisation appear in a very different light from that of seventy years ago. We no longer believe that progress is a necessary and automatic process, and that if men are left free to follow their own devices they will inevitably grow wiser and happier and more prosperous. We admit the reality of modern progress as a vast material achievement, but it means something very different from what our predecessors believed. Human life, like animal life, depends on a balance of forces, and if the balance is upset by the removal of restrictive factors, the process of readjustment is full of danger and difficulty.

Thus the rapid growth of wealth and population which followed the Industrial Revolution does not continue indefinitely; it creates its own limits by calling into existence new restrictive forces. Machinery makes possible a vast expansion of industry, but it also leads to over-production and unemployment. Science increases man's control over disease, but it also adds to the destructiveness of war. Colonial and economic expansion gives Europe the hegemony of the world, but it also awakens the hostility and rivalry of the oriental peoples. Capitalism creates new sources of wealth, but it also involves exploitation and social unrest.

It is now generally realised that we cannot progress indefinitely by drifting with the current, for the same current which has brought us to prosperity and power may

equally drag us to destruction. Order and guidance are necessary if disaster is to be avoided, for civilisation is not the result of a natural process of evolution, it is essentially due to the mastering of Nature by the human mind. It is an artificial order, governed and created by man's intelligence and will. There is no question to-day of the necessity of order; the only question at issue is whether the order we create shall be exclusively a material one, or whether it must be also spiritual.

This is the vital issue of the modern world. On the one hand we have the Communist solution which is the only thorough-going and consistent attempt to create an order on exclusively material foundations. But there is also the American solution which is less uncompromising, and also less inhuman. It is based on a combination of the political tradition of Liberalism and democracy with the material order of a standardised mass civilisation. As a working system it is infinitely more successful than the Russian experiment, but there is a latent contradiction between its political ideals and its economic practice, which produces intellectual dissatisfaction and moral unrest. There is no organic connection between the mechanism and materialism of the new mass civilisation and the old ideals of political liberty and social democracy which have their origin in the simpler conditions of an earlier period. Consequently, the American solution is not an absolute one.

It is bound up with local and temporary conditions, and its evolution is still incomplete.

On the other side we have the historical tradition of European culture. That tradition has never been a purely material one, for in the past it was bound up with the Christian religion, and during the last century it has been largely identified with the ideals of liberal humanitarianism and liberal nationalism. The French Revolution and English Liberalism, the Italian Risorgimento and German Nationalism, Parliamentarianism and Socialism—all these movements have contributed to the making of modern Europe and all of them possess a spiritual element. Yet they are not of themselves capable of producing a spiritual order. They are essentially *impure* phenomena, mingling idealism with selfishness and spiritual aspirations with materialistic aims. During the last half century, however, they have all been undergoing a kind of negative purification. The nationalism of Mazzini and Young Italy has become transformed into the nationalism of Mussolini and the Fascists. English Liberalism has passed from the hands of Lord John Russell and Gladstone to those of Mr. Lloyd George. Socialism has descended from the visions of Utopia to the realities of Westminster. The making of a world safe for democracy has involved four years of intensive slaughter and a peace that is in danger of ending peace.

In every case it has been the ideal element that has suffered, and to-day all the ideals that inspired the nineteenth century are shattered and discredited. Liberalism is everywhere in decline, and Parliamentaryism and democracy have suffered a general loss of prestige. Nationalism alone is still powerful, but in a grim and menacing shape which bodes little good to the cause of civilisation.

This decline in the forces of idealism does not, however, necessarily prove that Europe is ready to accept a purely material order. On the contrary, our confidence in material order is diminishing in proportion to our loss of faith in nineteenth-century ideals. We feel the need for spiritual order far more acutely than did the prosperous and self-confident nineteenth century, but we no longer believe that it will be the inevitable result of the political and economic evolution of the modern world. For behind all these various disappointments and disillusionments there is something still more profound—we have lost our faith in humanity, and that faith was the central dogma and inspiration of the whole modern development. This is somewhat surprising when we consider that the modern world is supposed to have begun with a revolt against the anthropocentric *weltanschauung* of the Christian world, but as T. E. Hulme trenchantly says, "The change which Copernicus is supposed to have brought about is the exact contrary of the fact. Before Copernicus man was not the centre of the universe; after Copernicus he was. You get

a change from a certain profundity and intensity to that flat and insipid optimism which, passing through its first stage of decay in Rousseau, has finally culminated in that state of slush in which we have the misfortune to live.”¹

But during the present century there has been a general reaction against this idealisation of man. The psychologists have sounded the depths of the human soul and have found nothing there but a little mud. The men of letters have blasted the romantic view of life with ridicule and scorn. The artists have substituted abstract for naturalistic ideals. The physicists have abandoned the naïve empiricism of the old scientific materialism for the mathematical abstractions of Relativity. Even the philosophers have begun to desert the tradition of subjectivity and idealism and are returning to realism and ontology.

This philosophical reaction is particularly marked in Germany, so long the stronghold of the opposite tradition. Even the neo-Kantians are retracing their steps and reinterpreting their master in the light of the older traditions of European thought. The philosophy of Aristotle and St. Thomas is no longer relegated to the limbo of dead systems, and there is a distinct tendency in German thought towards metaphysical and epistemological realism.

It is obvious that these changes have a profound effect in the attitude of the European mind towards religion.

¹ T. E. Hulme, *Speculations*, p. 80.

The exaltation of man and the idealisation of Nature led to the depreciation and the denial of spiritual reality. Protestantism succeeded in accommodating itself to the modern environment by the abandonment of metaphysics and dogma and a concentration on ethical ideals. But Catholicism could not live in an atmosphere of subjective idealism and moral pragmatism. It was forced to go into the desert. To-day we are witnessing what Wüst has called "the return of Catholicism from exile." Once more Catholic thought can find a place in European culture and can give its message to the modern world. For Catholicism is not compromised by the bankruptcy of nineteenth-century idealism. It has never denied—as sectarian Christianity tends to deny—the existence and the good of the natural order, but it recognises the limitations of human nature and maintains that spiritual order is only attainable in the light of absolute spiritual principles.

Hence the remarkable revival of Catholic intellectual life that has taken place during the last twenty-five years. Half a century ago it was taken as a matter of course in France and Germany that the intellectual should be an unbeliever, and that the practising Catholic should be an exile from the living thought of the age. To-day this is no longer the case, and it is among the intellectuals and the men of letters that the influence of Catholicism is most marked. This is most strikingly exemplified in respect to philosophy, where the Thomist revival inaugurated by

Pope Leo XIII. has been justified by results. In France we have Père Sertillanges and M. Maritain, both of them brilliant interpreters of St. Thomas to the modern world; M. Gilson, the historian of mediæval thought; and the late Père Rousselot, S.J., the author of that remarkable book, *L'Intellectualisme de St. Thomas*. In Belgium there is the School of Louvain, which has been for forty years a pioneer of the Catholic revival of philosophical studies, and which has recently produced a work of the first importance in Père Maréchal's *Point de Départ de la Métaphysique*. In Germany the revival of Catholic thought first showed itself in the historical work of scholars like Denifle, Ehrle, Baümker, von Herlting, and Grabmann, who have done so much to restore our knowledge of mediæval thought in all its branches; but the influence of Newman, as well as that of modern German thinkers like Max Scheler also contributed to the renewed activity of Catholic thought. It is true that Scheler's personal adhesion to Catholicism was incomplete and temporary, but his criticism of Kantian ethics and his return to objective spiritual values in his treatment of ethical and sociological problems made the intellectual world conscious of the spiritual riches of the Catholic tradition and aroused Catholics themselves to a new consciousness of their intellectual mission. Consequently, the last few years have seen a remarkable development of religious thought; and to-day it is in Germany that Catholic philosophy is most in con-

tact with the tendencies of modern thought and most alive to the needs of the present age, as we shall see in the work of such writers as Przywara, Wust, Carl Schmitt, Theodor Haecker and von Hildebrand.

At the same time there has been an equally striking revival of Catholic activity in the field of pure literature. This is most obvious in France, where so large a number of the younger writers have devoted themselves to the service of Catholic ideals. The movement had begun before the war with Péguy and Claudel and Psichari, and it owed much to the influence of Maurice Barrès, although he was not himself a Christian. To-day it is represented by poets and dramatists like Claudel and Henri Ghéon, critics such as Henri Bremond, Charles du Bos, Gabriel Marcel and Henri Massis, and novelists such as François Mauriac and Julian Green—these, with many others, contributing to such series as the *Roseau d'or*, the *Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journée*, the *Questions Disputées* and *Virgile*.

In Germany this movement is more recent and is far less known in this country. This is regrettable, since the German situation has many points of similarity to our own. The central tradition in German literature is derived from a Protestant culture, and Catholic writers in the past have suffered from the restricted atmosphere of an opposition minority culture. To-day, however, these disadvantages are being overcome by a new spirit of confidence and intellectual energy, and one has only to look at modern

Catholic reviews, such as *Hochland* or *Der Gral* to realise the vitality and activity of the new movement.

In England, Catholics suffer in an even greater degree from the same unfavourable conditions that exist in Germany, yet here also there is a noticeable revival of literary activity among English Catholics; indeed, their achievement is greater than we should expect from the social and numerical weakness of the Catholic element.

Nevertheless, the Catholic intellectual revival, as a whole, is predominantly a Continental movement, and its significance is not yet realised in this country. The existence of Catholic philosophy is hardly recognised except in academic circles, and it is still possible for writers like Dr. Coulton and Bishop Barnes, whose own mental outlook is entirely that of the past, to treat Catholicism as an exploded superstition which is completely out of touch with the mind of the present age.

It is one of the chief aims of the present series to make the contemporary movement of Catholic thought on the Continent better known in this country. In an age when England is ceasing to be an island, and when the external forms of civilisation are becoming everywhere more uniform and more cosmopolitan, it is necessary for all of us to do what is in our power to restore the intellectual community of European culture—and for Catholics before all, since they stand almost alone to-day as the representatives

of a universal spiritual order in the midst of the material and external uniformity of a cosmopolitan machine-made civilisation.

We must not, of course, exaggerate the importance of the intellectual element in the Catholic revival. It would be a great mistake on the part of Catholics to claim for themselves a monopoly of intelligence. Catholicism makes its appeal, not to those who demand the latest intellectual novelty nor to those who always want to be on the winning side, but to those who seek spiritual reality. Our advantage lies not in the excellence of our brains, but in the strength of our principles. Like the proverbial conies, we may be a feeble folk but we make our dwelling in the rocks. Our thought is not "free" in the sense that it is at liberty to create its own principles and to make gods in its own image. But it is just this "freedom" which is the cause of the discredit and anarchy into which modern thought has fallen.

The attempt of the nineteenth century to prescribe spiritual ideals in literature and ethics, while refusing to admit the objective existence of a spiritual order, has ended in failure, and to-day we have to choose between the complete expulsion of the spiritual element from human life or its recognition as the very foundation of reality. In so far as the modern world accepts the latter alternative, it can no longer disregard the existence of the Catholic solution, for Catholicism is the great historic representative of

the principle of the spiritual order—an order which is not the creation of the human mind, but its ruler and creator.

The following essay of M. Maritain's deals with this problem in its most fundamental aspect—it is concerned with the essential relations between religion and culture. It carries the discussion of the inter-relation of the spiritual and the temporal, which was the subject of the same author's *The Things That Are Not Cæsar's*, out of the political sphere to its ultimate spiritual and metaphysical basis. It is an old subject and one that has been buried under the accumulated *débris* of dead controversies and extinct heresies, but none the less it remains a living issue for the world to-day, not only to the Catholic, to whom this essay is primarily addressed, but to all those who believe in the social realisation of Christian principles.

M. Jacques Maritain is one of the most representative figures in that Catholic intellectual revival which has already been referred to. The idea of spiritual order has been the guiding principle of all his literary activity and he has been one of the leaders in that reorientation of thought which he has himself defined as "a return to the real and the absolute, by the way of intelligence, for the primacy of the spirit." If his allegiance to the pure Thomist tradition seems at times to lead him to an excessive depreciation of modern philosophy and modern scientific method, it must be remembered that this is not due

to any lack of familiarity with them. He was a pupil of Bergson and came to St. Thomas fresh from the study of the moderns. Indeed, it was his very familiarity with modern thought which led him to appreciate the objectivity and intellectual strength of the *philosophia perennis*.

The author of the second essay, Peter Wust, is a thinker of a very different type.¹ His philosophy is not the result of the acceptance of a classical tradition but the fruit of an intense personal struggle, the goal of a long spiritual odyssey. The motive of his speculation was not an intellectual curiosity, but a spiritual need. As Fichte says, in a sentence which Wust takes as the motto of his work, "We begin to philosophise out of wantonness and thereby we destroy our innocence: and then we realise our nakedness and thenceforth we philosophise from the need for deliverance."

Nevertheless, Wust, no less than Maritain, represents the same movement of return from subjectivity to realism and to the primacy of the spiritual which is characteristic of the new tendency of European thought. He has described the state of spiritual isolation and exile which was the portion of a Catholic in the intellectual world of Berlin twenty years ago, and the gradual change of thought in the years which followed the war that has liberated German Catholicism from the spiritual Ghetto in which it had been confined for so long. That state of things has passed away,

¹ *Crisis in the West*.

let us hope for ever, and the way is open for a renaissance of Catholic action, both in intellectual and social life, but for that very reason a new responsibility rests on us all to-day.

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON.

ENGLAND.

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RELIGION AND CULTURE

By JACQUES MARITAIN

I

NATURE AND CULTURE

CULTIVATING a field means inciting nature by some human labour to produce fruits which nature left to itself would have been incapable of producing, for what nature left to itself alone produces is "wild" vegetation. Such a figure gives us an idea of what that culture means in the vocabulary of philosophy, the culture not of an expanse of soil, but of humanity itself. Man being a spirit animating a body of flesh, his nature in itself is a progressive nature. The labour of reason and the virtues is natural in the sense that it is in conformity with the essential inclinations of human nature; it brings into play the essential springs of human nature. It is not natural in the sense that it is supplied ready made by nature; it is an addition to what nature produces by itself and by itself alone. Nature, no doubt, can also be considered without this labour of reason, and as reduced therefore to energies of a sensitive order and mere instincts, or considered before this labour of reason, that is to say, in a state of, as it were, embryonic involution and absolute primitiveness.

Culture so appears to be natural to man in the same

sense as the labour of reason and the virtues of which it is the fruit and earthly fulfilment: it answers the fundamental aspiration of human nature, but it is the word of the spirit and liberty adding their efforts to the effort of nature. Instead of the word CULTURE, which relates to the rational development of the human being considered in all its generality, I might equally well have used the word CIVILISATION, which relates to that same development considered in an eminent case—I mean to say in the production of the State and civil life of which civilisation is, as it were, the prolongation and enlargement. The State and civilisation are, at one and the same time, works natural to man and works of reason and virtue.

Many German and Russian philosophers draw a distinction between civilisation and culture and employ the former, conceived in a pejorative sense, to denote a development of social life which is above all material, mechanical and extrinsic (a decrepit and sclerosed culture). We are free to define the terms we use as we like. In the sense in which I understand it, a civilisation is deserving of the name only if it is a culture, a truly human and therefore mainly intellectual, moral and spiritual development (taking the word *spiritual* in its widest acceptance).

Three observations may be related to the foregoing remarks. My first observation is that culture or civilisation, presupposing both nature and the labour of reason, ought

to keep within the line of nature, but may deviate from that line, allow itself to be sponged upon by an *artificialism* contrary to nature and by perversions of varying degrees of gravity (even in animal "communities" we see communities of ants ruined by a passion for the intoxicating sugar they derive from certain domesticated insects, which devour the eggs of these drug-addicted ants ¹). If the *per accidens* is confused with the *per se*, it must be admitted with Rousseau, at the sight of such perverted and therefore execrable societies, that culture and civilisation, left to themselves, corrupt man.

But as *perseities* are unavoidable and as civilisation of its very nature derives from reason, it is impossible, and this is my second observation, impossible, I say, to execrate civilisation without, at the same time, execrating the *form of reason*, the formation vitally achieved by reason in human things, for that would be to assert the pre-eminence of potentiality and the formless, on the pretence that they are more productive.

My third observation is that, if we do so, we tend to the destruction of man. Man, unlike the other animals, has not a solid rock bottom, as it were, of instinctive life

¹ "Many symphilics devour the eggs of ants, others suck their blood, others again lay their eggs in the larvæ. Nevertheless, the colony of ants maintains and carefully feeds its guests in order to obtain the liquid for which they have such a marked preference. This liquid is not a food, but a sweet, and the ants sacrifice their young to obtain it, often even to the point of endangering the State." F. Buytendijk, *Psychologie des animaux*, Payot, 1928, p. 161.

constituting a definite structure of behaviour sufficiently determined to make the exercise of life possible. Any erosion or excavation or elimination of rational life in an attempt to discover that solid rock bottom is a deadly error. There will be no end to the excavation, there is no solid and perfect structure, no natural regulation of the instinctive human life. The whole play of the instincts, be they as numerous and powerful as you like, is, in the case of man, open and exposed to view, involves a relative indetermination which finds its normal perfection and normal regulation in reason alone. If Freud absurdly calls the child a *polymorphous pervert*, it is because he fails to take account of this indetermination. A general philosophy of a very inferior kind prevents this very remarkable observer (who is also goaded by a violent metaphysical hatred of the form of reason) from distinguishing between potentiality and act; he substitutes for potentiality a sum of conflicting actualities, for indetermination orientated towards normal actuation (but susceptible of manifold abnormal actuations) a constellation of opposite actuations, in which what we describe as normal ceases to be normal and becomes merely a particular instance of the abnormal. Nevertheless, the kind of infinitude peculiar to the mind in the case of the human being gives a sort of infinity, a sort of indetermination, to the very life of the senses and instincts, which is incapable of finding its natural point of fixation—I mean in conformity with the

peculiar requirements and destinies of human nature—elsewhere than in reason and the formations which reason produces. Otherwise it will be fixed awry, as any chance dominating passion determines, and deviate from nature. The truly and fully natural man is not nature's man, the uncultivated soil, but the virtuous man, the human soil cultivated by undeviating reason, man formed by the inner culture of the intellectual and moral virtues. He alone has a consistency, a personality.

If nature by itself alone were formed in us, had a countenance, there would be reason to fear that every virtue might be like the false virtues, like the pharisaical virtues, and distort that countenance or cover it with a plaster.

But nature acquires a countenance in our case only when it is perfected by the mind, man acquires his truth only when he is fashioned from within by reason and virtue (I mean undeviating reason whose supremacy in our life is guaranteed only by the supernatural gifts; I mean true virtue which is entirely deserving of the name only if it is vivified by charity). Genuine *sincerity* presents a mirror which is clear as crystal to the larvæ dwelling in us and contemplates them with courage, in order to give them a human countenance by a work of freedom; it does not refuse to bear a countenance. There is no more mendacious influence than sincerity as conceived by André Gide, the resolution of the human being in the vain postulates, dis-

cordant and simultaneous, of the formless, the *materia prima*.

I will not continue the parenthesis. Let our conclusion be that culture or civilisation is the expansion of the peculiarly human life, including not only whatever material development may be necessary and sufficient to enable us to lead an upright life on this earth, but also and above all the moral development, the development of the speculative and practical activities (artistic and ethical) peculiarly worthy of being called a human development.

It is important in the next place to realise fully that culture or civilisation by its very nature belongs to the *temporal* sphere, in other words has a specifying object—the terrestrial and perishable good of our life on this earth—the subject matter of which is of the natural order. It must doubtless be subordinated to eternal life, as an intermediate end is subordinated to the ultimate end. And such subordination to a superior end gives it an intrinsic superelevation in its own peculiar order: a Christian civilisation has higher standards, a more perfect earthly propriety than a pagan civilisation; if we reflect that the friendship of charity itself constitutes the essential bond of peace in Christian civilisation, that the infused moral virtues inform social life in Christian society, we see that the supreme moral regulations, by virtue of which it performs its work on earth, fall within the province of the

supernatural order. Even a Christian civilisation, however, a civilisation superelevated in its peculiar order, because it is Christian, by virtues proceeding from above, becomes so superelevated through realising (rather than through the unaided forces of nature) the very postulates of nature. It applies the rules of the Christian reason to a subject matter in the natural order, *versatur circa materiam naturalis ordinis*,¹ and the sphere in which it develops so considered may be said to be the sphere of the natural activities. In itself and by its specific object, it is involved in time and the vicissitudes of time, is perishable, essentially human. And it incorporates the benefits it derives from the supernatural order, from the virtues of the saints, for example, or the intercession of the contemplatives, in its own peculiar substance, draws them towards its own peculiar end, which still remains, even superelevated, a certain common good of man on this earth, in his terrestrial life.

Because this human development is not only material, but also and mainly moral, it goes without saying that the part played in it by the *religious* element is consequently a *principal* part. In truth the religion which the concept of culture or civilisation, *in abstracto*, of itself requires is only natural religion. But human civilisations have in fact received a better, and more onerous, burden. We know "that a *state of pure nature*, one in which God *ex hypothesi* had

¹ I am applying here to Christian culture in general the expression used by John of St. Thomas with reference to the infused moral virtues. Cf. *Curs. theol.*, Vol. VI., disp. xvi., a 7, § 29.

abandoned man to the sole resources of the activities of his mind and will, has never existed. From the earliest times God willed to bring to the knowledge of men things far in excess of the requirements of any nature that ever was or ever could be created. He revealed to them the depths of His divine life, the secret of His eternity. And to guide their footsteps to such heights, to prepare them, on this earth already, for the vision of such splendours, He spread over the world, like a tablecloth, grace which was capable of divinising our knowledge and our love. God makes such divine advances to all men at all times; for He is the light 'which enlighteneth every man,'¹ He will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.'² His advances are accepted or rejected."³

This is the reason why none of the religions recorded in history is the simple natural religion contemplated in the abstract by philosophers. There are, no doubt, many features to be found in such religions answering the natural religious aspirations of the human being, but all in fact derive from a more remote origin, all retain some vestige of the primordial revelations and ordinations, and have all, with the exception of the religion of Christ, declined from the supernatural order and more or less deviated consecutively from the natural order.

And these religions, let it be observed, by the very fact

¹ St. John i. 9.

² 1 Tim. ii. 4.

³ Ch. Journet, *Vie Intellectuelle*, March, 1929, p. 439.

of becoming naturalised, of shrinking to the dimensions of fallen nature, became particularised to some definite culture hostile to other cultures, became differentiated like languages and social groups. The piety of pagan antiquity admirably perceived the vital need the State has of religion; its great misfortune was that it absorbed religion into civilisation, into a particular local civilisation, by confusing the State and religion, by deifying the State, or—it comes to the same thing—by nationalising the gods who were turned into the first citizens in the State. In this *sociological* collapse of religion is doubtless to be found the deepset cause or at all events the most significant characteristic of polytheism, which was nevertheless powerless to efface completely the fundamental "henotheist" feeling. The marvel of Israel, a supernatural marvel, forcibly imposed on stiff rebellious necks is that the God of Israel is also the one, transcendent, ineffable God, the God of Heaven and earth, of the whole earth. Exclusivism and universalism, observed Père Clérissac—"the Decalogue appeals not to a local conscience but to the conscience of all mankind; and the Jerusalem of Messianic times is the vision of a country which is chiefly spiritual, the country of souls. The Prophets speak and strive with the sole object of securing the predominance of the Kingdom of God which is in men's hearts in the first place and embraces all nations." ¹

Everywhere else in the ancient world nationalism

¹ *Le Mystère de l'Église*, 3rd Ed., Saint Maximin, 1925, p. 22.

sponged upon and corrupted religion; it absorbed religion in culture, made it an element of a civilisation, of a culture. I mean to say that the ancient world, while riveting social life to, and occasionally crushing it under, religion, while honouring religion with a terrifying power of veneration, while enslaving man to the gods, nevertheless enfeoffed religion to civilisation—not in the least after the manner of the modern profane world, which makes religion the mere servant of civilisation considered as something superior, but on the contrary by making religion the governing principle of the State, yet individuated by the State, living with the same unique and indistinct life, ruling like a despot over the State, but inconceivable without the State, and bound substantially to it, enclosed within the State, determined and circumscribed by the State and, finally, in an absolutely metaphysical sense, existing *for* the State, as the soul of a plant exists for that plant. The *caritas humani generis* appears but as a wan, sublime and ineffective prefiguration of authentic charity, a mere philosopher's ideal, a sigh heaved by reason, alien, if not hostile, to religion.

True religion, however, is supernatural, come down from Heaven with Him Who is the Author of grace and truth. It is not of man or of the world or a civilisation or a culture or of civilisation or culture: it is of God. It transcends every civilisation and every culture. It is the supreme beneficent and animating principle of all civilisations and cul-

tures, while in itself independent of them all, free, universal, strictly universal, Catholic. It is with reference to those two aspects of things, the necessary immanence of the religion of Christ in culture, as of God in the creature—and the absolute transcendence of that same religion—that I would offer the following observations.

II

THE CATHOLIC RELIGION AND CULTURE

THE modern world is no more a creation of polemics than modern philosophy: it is a certain historical type of civilisation, spiritually dominated from the very beginning by the humanism of the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the Cartesian Reform. What are its characteristics from our present point of view? Like every other civilisation it contains a positive element of ontological tension and vitality which in this case seems to be constituted by a courageous, untiring effort to make human nature yield its maximum earthly output. But this positive element, good in itself, praiseworthy and deserving of affection, is accompanied by a privation. Let me say—it has become a commonplace, but is none the less eternally true—that culture, while continuing its natural growth, has become separated in the modern world from the sacred and turned back on man himself. The Middle Ages had fashioned human nature according to a “sacral” type of civilisation, based on the conviction that earthly institutions, with all their vigour and strength, are at the service of God and divine things to realise His Kingdom on this

earth. The Middle Ages doggedly strove to realise that Kingdom on earth, dreaming—yet without any rigour of austerity and without preventing life from pursuing the normal course of its activity—of a hierarchically unified world, in which the Emperor on the summit of the temporal should maintain the body politic of Christendom in unity, as the Pope on the summit of the spiritual maintained the Church in unity. Such was the dream of the Holy Roman Empire, a dream which constituted an ideal, a “myth” strictly appropriate to the cultural conditions of the period; it was a dream which has been dissolved for ever: it presupposed, along with a magnificently bold appreciation of principles, a vast ignorance of the universe and an imperious optimism: its corpse has long encumbered modern history. It required Napoleon and the whole nineteenth century to bury it once and for all.

To return, however, to the modern world. The object of culture, as that world conceives it, is purely terrestrial ends which are henceforth self-sufficient, no longer super-elevated in their peculiar order by their ordination to the Kingdom of God; to use a word which latterly has enjoyed considerable vogue, it is a type of *anthropocentric* culture. We should not forget that in virtue of a natural law of growth and as a consequence of the leaven of the Gospel deposited in humanity, a certain progress takes its course in the heart of that civilisation, a progress which may be

described as *material* if the word *material* be understood in its widest philosophical extent, for the equipment of culture has progressed not only in the order of the scientific and industrial means of exploiting nature, but also in the order of intellectual, artistic and spiritual means and technique. There has even been a rise in the level, I do not say of moral life or moral ideals, but of the ideas and feelings which constitute the static conditions as it were of moral life. That the structure is a fragile one, I am well aware; be that as it may, the idea of slavery or torture or the use of military methods to impose constraint upon consciences and a certain number of similar ideas are, it would appear, spontaneously repugnant at the present day to more people than formerly; disapproval of such ideas, at any rate, has attained the dignity of an official commonplace, and that is always something.

In short, it appears that in retiring within himself man has undergone as it were in spite of himself the introvertive movement peculiar to the mind; he went inside his own self—and his object was not to seek God. A general progress in the *assumption of self-consciousness* has thus been the characteristic of modern times. While the world turned away from spirituality *par excellence* and that love which is our true end to proceed towards exterior advantages and the exploitation of sensible nature, the universe of immanence was opening its doors—and sometimes they were very low—a subjective intensity of scrutiny was re-

vealing their own peculiar spirituality to science, art, poetry, to the very passions of man and his vices, and the exigency of liberty became all the more clamorous as men moved farther and farther away from the true conditions and the true notion of liberty. In a word, in virtue of the law of compensation that governs history, the *reflex age*, with all the diminutions and losses which the word connotes, involved in other respects an undeniable enrichment, which must be considered a positive gain, in the knowledge of the creature and human affairs, even though such knowledge was destined to find its outlet in the inner hell of man gnawing his own vitals. That murky way is not a blind alley and the fruit gathered in passing has been incorporated into our substance.

I had in mind everything that I have just summarily indicated when I referred to the *material* progress taking place in modern civilisation and the effort being made therein to make human nature produce its maximum earthly output.

Need I add—it explains certain aspects of the modern world—that many things which ought to have been done (and at all costs, because the will of the Master of history brooks no let or hindrance), many things which Catholics should have done, were done by others and against them, when Catholics failed? Heresies, also, and schisms, wars and catastrophes, the Devil himself, are under the universal dominion of the divine government and work against

their will in weaving a woof which God sees, stimulate history and procure the advancement of His work. Their empire defines precisely the extent of our bankruptcy.

Joseph de Maistre considered that the French Revolution was of Satanic origin. He was too profound a philosopher to draw the conclusion that one should strive purely and simply to erase the French Revolution from the great book of history. That were folly indeed! That book is written under God's will, and by His leave Satan may hold the pen: it is then an act of cowardice not to see and not to call by its name the evil which is done forever; but it is an act of stupidity not to realise also that the line of being continues amid all possible deviations, that the divine text may still be read by the angels, that some good, great or little, has been achieved (however little it be, it does not matter; God has willed it). We know that wheat and cockle grow up together and will be separated only at the last day. We have even been advised not to gather up the cockle lest we root up the wheat also together with it: which shows that the distinction is beyond our capacity; I mean the distinction of the *utility* value of events or men for the divine barns and in relation to the common good of creation, that is to say, in relation to an ultimate goal beyond our ken. The bishops of the Restoration period thought they were working for the Lord when they sought to prop the altar against a worm-eaten throne; they were unwittingly sowing the seeds of misunderstandings which

came near to proving the undoing of Europe. It is another kind of distinction which the mind requires from us, the distinction of the *truth or falsity, good or evil value* things on this earth have in relation to intemporal laws which are well within our knowledge; and we must make an effort to perceive clearly, from this point of view, the significance of the spiritual dominants of our history.

This was not an idle digression. I was saying that the spiritual dominant of modern culture, whatever may be its positive historic vocation, whatever progress may be taking place in it, is, as I have attempted to show, that it is an anthropocentric culture: humanism *dissociated* from the Incarnation. We are now in a position to distinguish three degrees or moments in the conception which modern times have formed and continue to form of culture. There is a first moment when civilisation lavishly produces the most magnificent fruits, forgetful of the roots from which the sap ascends, and it is thought that it must establish by the sole virtue of reason a certain human order, still conceived according to the Christian pattern inherited from preceding ages, a pattern which becomes a constraint and begins to be spoiled. That moment may be described as the *classical* moment of our culture, the moment of Christian naturalism.

There is a second moment when it is perceived that a culture which keeps itself dissociated from the supreme

supernatural standards must necessarily take sides against them: it is then required to establish an order which shall be considered to be based upon nature, and is expected to emancipate man and guarantee the spirit of riches undisturbed possession of the earth; that is the moment of rationalist optimism, the *bourgeois* moment of our culture. We are just about to emerge from it. A third moment is the moment of materialist pessimism, the *revolutionary* moment, when man, irrevocably considering himself to be his own last end and unable any longer to endure the machinery of this world, engages, as we see in Russia at the present day, in a deliberate battle against natural law and its Author and undertakes to produce out of a radical atheism an entirely new humanity. These three moments are related in continuity in spite of strong secondary oppositions; making a violent schematisation of things, we may say that they have succeeded one another chronologically; but they are also co-existent, mingled with one another in varying degrees. All these conceptions misunderstand human nature and ultimately conduce to claiming for human nature the conditions of pure spirit, yet in the flesh itself and by the exasperation of an absolutely material power. It is a fictitious emancipation, the waste and dispersal of the human substance in the endless multiplication of needs and sadness; the control of procreation not by chastity, but by doing violence to natural finalities; the control of the race by the eugenic sterilisation of de-

fectives; ¹ the control of the self by the abolition of family ties and unconcern for descendants; the control of life by liberty to commit suicide and euthanasia. It is remarkable that a certain conception of the control of nature by man is compensated in the balance sheet, with startling uniformity, by one same single consequence: the cessation of life.

To such a conception of culture the Christian conception is opposed as a truly human and *humanist* conception, and, in using the word *humanist*, I have in mind the only humanism which does not belie its etymology, the humanism of which a Thomas Aquinas gives us the example: humanism purified by the blood of Christ, the humanism of the Incarnation.

Such a humanism, respecting essential hierarchies, sets the contemplative above the active life; it knows that the contemplative life tends more directly to the love of the first Principle in which perfection consists. It is not a question of sacrificing the active life, but of making it tend to the type it realises in the perfect, that is to say, to an activity all overflowing from the superabundance of contemplation.

¹ This matter deserves a special study to itself. The least to be said is that such legislation puts into the hands of men and of the State a weapon of terrible danger.

It remains that this method of assuring the mastery of man over Nature is, like the others, of an entirely negative kind and shows, as they do, a general tendency in the direction of death. The recent Encyclical *Casti Connutii* gives the reason for these being condemnable in themselves.

But if the contemplation of the saints be placed upon the summit of human life, must it not then be said that all the activities of man, and civilisation itself, are ordered thereto as to their end? It would appear to be so, says St. Thomas Aquinas (with a note of irony, perhaps). For what is the object of servile work and trade unless to provide the body with the necessities of life so that it may be in a fit state for contemplation? What end do the moral virtues and prudence serve, if not to appease the turbulence of the passions and secure the interior tranquillity which contemplation needs? What end does the whole government of civil life serve but to assure the exterior tranquillity necessary to contemplation? "So that, properly considered, all the activities of human life seem to be in the service of such as contemplate the truth." ¹

There is an idea of the hierarchy of values far different from the industrialist conception, wholly concentrated on production, which the modern world forms of civilisation. We see to what an extent the supremacy of the economic, itself derived from a system based on the fecundity of money—a fecundity which, like everything that transgresses the conditions laid down by nature, knows no limits—to what an extent the materialist or capitalist or Marxian conception of culture is at variance with the mind of the common Doctor of the Church.

Are we then to understand that the relation between

¹ *Sum. contra Gentiles.*, iii. 37.

the Christian conception of culture and the contemporary world is merely one of incompatibility, and that the only ideal the Christian conception has to set before us is the outworn ideal, now definitely engulfed in history, of mediæval times? How often must I repeat that I am well aware that the course of time is irreversible? Christian wisdom does not suggest that we return to the Middle Ages: it would have us move further forward. Besides, the civilisation of the Middle Ages, however magnificent and splendid it may have been, more splendid still, no doubt, in the refined memories of history than in the reality of experience, was very far removed from the full realisation of the Christian idea of civilisation.

The Christian idea is opposed to the modern world, I agree, to the extent that the modern world is *inhuman*.

But to the extent that the modern world, in spite of all its defects in quality, involves a real growth of history, no, the Christian conception of culture is not opposed to it. Rather the reverse: it would endeavour to preserve in the modern world and bring back to the order of the spirit all the riches of life the modern world contains.

The anguish, the great anguish, which rends the modern world, whence does it proceed if not from all the inhumanity it involves? That is to say that it aspires unwittingly to a civilisation of a Christian type, a civilisation like that of which the principles of St. Thomas give us an idea.

I cannot refrain from indicting in the present controversy one genius at all events among the many responsible for the evils which afflict us: need I mention the name of my dear enemy, René Descartes? It would be interesting to point out the repercussions on culture—in the context I mean politics and economics in the first place—of Cartesian dualism. Descartes, as everybody knows, conceived the human being as a composite of two substances, each complete in itself: pure spirit and geometrical extension. An angel driving a machine.

Transpose such a conception into the order of political and economic relations. Such a transposition, I hasten to say, was never made by Descartes himself; but I blame the *Cartesian spirit*.

We shall then have the conception of a political and economic machinery similar to the machine of the body in the Cartesian philosophy and governed solely by natural laws of the same sort as the laws governing mechanics and chemistry. To this machinery, existing with a value of its own and with its peculiar and purely material, inhuman requirements, you may, if you are an idealist and have a regard for moral values, add a moral superstructure, the requirements of justice and virtue, which will there take the place of the spiritual soul in the Cartesian machine. If you are inclined to realism or cynicism, you will consider such a superstructure as a perfectly useless epiphenomenon, just as La Mettrie, in the eighteenth century,

considered the Cartesian soul to be useless and invented the theory of the Man-Machine, as Descartes had invented the theory of the animal-machine.

Be that as it may, what is important is that in such a conception politics and economics have each their own peculiar and specific ends, which are not human ends, but purely material ends. The end of politics is the material prosperity, the power and success of the State, and everything that may procure such an end—even an act of treachery or an act of injustice—is *politically* good. The end of economics is the acquisition and limitless increase of riches, material riches as such. And everything that may procure such an end—even an act of injustice, even oppressive and inhuman conditions of life—is *economically* good. Justice, friendship, and every truly human value thenceforth become alien to the structure of political and economic life as such, and if morality intervenes with its peculiar exigencies, it will be to engage in conflict with political and economic reality, with political and economic science. A *homo æconomicus* will be invented whose sole function is to accumulate material goods. If you attempt to duplicate him with a man subject to the control of morality, a truly human man, the duplication will be ineffective; the economic man, whose appetite is insatiable, will in reality eat up the moral duplication and everything else and exert himself to pound, like an ogreish machine, the wretched true humanity toiling in the basements of history.

This kind of political and economic physicisism has really poisoned modern culture. In opposition to it the traditions of the *philosophia perennis* may once more teach us a specifically human conception. Such a conception—it is certainly not the invention of St. Thomas; all the superior minds of antiquity, even pagan antiquity, shared it, but St. Thomas, following Aristotle, clearly formulated the principles of it—considers politics and economics not as physical sciences, but as branches of ethics, the science of human actions. However immense the part played therein by conditions determined by the nature of material things and their automatic action, such a science is, nevertheless, defined by reference to the use which our freedom makes and ought to make of such conditions. Its end is the upright life, the good *human* life on this earth: a system of life worthy of man and of what is of most importance in man, that is to say, the spirit. Political and economic laws are not purely physical laws, like the laws of mechanics or chemistry, they are laws of human action, investing in themselves moral values. Justice, humanity, unswerving love of one's neighbour, are essentially part of the very structure of politics and economics. An act of treachery is not merely a thing forbidden by individual morality, but a thing *politically* bad, tending to ruin the political health of the social body. Oppression of the poor and the acquisition of riches, considered as an end in itself, are not merely things forbidden by individual morality, but things *eco-*

nomically bad, tending to thwart the very end of economics, because the end of economics is a *human* end.

St. Thomas teaches that to lead a moral life, to develop in the life of the virtues, man needs a certain minimum of comfort and material security. Such a doctrine signifies that extreme poverty is socially, as Léon Bloy and Péguy so clearly perceived, a kind of Hell; it also signifies that social conditions which expose the majority of men to the close risk of committing sin, by requiring a kind of heroism from those who desire to fulfil the law of God, are conditions which it is a duty in strict justice unceasingly to denounce and to strive to *change*.

The world at the moment seems to be in the grip of two opposite forms of barbarism. I have not the least idea whether it will escape. In any event it must not be forgotten that if the Christian conception has not been the spiritual dominant of civilisation for some centuries past, it has still remained alive, damned up, not abolished. That such a conception may succeed in dominating culture is still a *possibility* to-day: whether such a possibility will be realised or not is God's secret. We must therefore work with our whole hearts to bring such a realisation about, no longer, certainly, according to the ideal of the Holy Roman Empire but according to a new ideal, a much less unitary ideal, in which an entirely moral and spiritual activity of the Church shall preside over the temporal order of a multitude of politically and culturally heterogeneous

nations, whose religious differences are still not likely soon to disappear. If facts are fated to fall short of such an expectation, if the work of Christendom must henceforth develop in the bosom of what Scripture calls the mystery of iniquity, as that mystery formerly developed in the bosom of the work of Christendom, we may, at any rate, indulge the hope that, in the new world, an authentic Christian culture will arise, "a culture no longer gathered and assembled, as in the Middle Ages, in a homogeneous body of civilisation occupying a tiny privileged portion of the inhabited earth, but scattered over the whole surface of the globe—a living network of hearths of the Christian life disseminated among the nations within the great supra-cultural unity of the Church. Instead of a fortress towering amidst the lands, let us think rather of the host of stars strewn across the sky." ¹

The foregoing observations make it clearly apparent what a prime, fundamental necessity it is to the life of the world that Catholicism penetrate to the very depths of, and vivify, culture, and that Catholics form sound cultural, philosophical, historical, social, political, economic and artistic conceptions, and endeavour to transmit them into the reality of history.

The supreme detachment which is the boast of the separated churches of the East, the refusal to lend a help-

¹ Cf. my *St. Thomas Aquinas*.

ing hand to the sorry labours of this earth, the all too human vertigo of spiritual humility and liberty which impelled Dostoievski to revolt against the wisdom of Rome, dissemble an abandonment of the vocation imposed upon baptised souls by the supreme laws of the redeeming Incarnation. They go down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho with their eyes raised to Heaven and weep for compassion over wounded nature; they dare not lay the unctions of justice on its ailing body; they have such regard for its infirmity that they consider the attempt to cure it by endeavouring to subject terrestrial and social things to the order of the Gospel and of reason as a seduction of the spirit of the world.

As far as we Catholics are concerned, it is incumbent on us to recover much time lamentably lost. How many things would be different if, some sixty years ago,¹ it had been a disciple of St. Thomas who had written a book on Capital as decisive as that of Marx, but based on true principles! Our principles, alas! are asleep and error is ever on the watch, active and enterprising. I have referred elsewhere to the terrifying lack of attention shown by the Catholic world to the warnings issued by Leo XIII with reference to social affairs. On the whole, and in spite of the effort of a few, who kept honour safe, the bankruptcy of this world in the last century in face of problems

¹ The first volume of *Das Kapital* appeared, as is well known, in 1867; the other two volumes were published, after the death of Karl Marx (1883), in 1885 and 1894 respectively.

directly involving the dignity of human personality and Christian justice is one of the most distressing phenomena of modern history.

That the religion of Christ should penetrate culture to its very depths is not required merely from the point of view of the salvation of souls and in relation to their last end: in this respect a Christian civilisation appears as something truly maternal and sanctified, procuring the terrestrial good and the development of the various natural activities by sedulous attention to the imperishable interests and most profound aspirations of the human heart. It ought from the point of view also of the specific ends of civilisation itself to be Christian. For human reason, considered without any relation whatever to God, is insufficient by its unaided natural resources to procure the good of men and nations.¹ As a matter of fact, and in the conditions governing life at present, it is not possible for man to expand his nature in a fundamentally and permanently upright manner unless under the sky of grace. Left to himself, he cannot but fail to achieve the difficult harmonies of the virtues, the difficult rational regulations, the pure consonances of justice and friendship without which culture deviates from its most exalted ends. St. Augustine's words with reference to the State apply

¹ Cf. The *Syllabus* of Pius IX. in Denzinger-Bannwart's *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 16th and 17th Ed., Fribourg-im.-B., 1928, p. 466, 1703. [The text of the condemned proposition is as follows: "*The human reason, without regard to God, is the sole arbiter of truth and falsehood, good and evil; it is a law unto itself and sufficient by its natural resources to procure the good of men and nations.*"]

equally to civilisation: "The State does not derive its felicity from another source than man, for the State is merely a multitude of men living in harmony." ² And one Name only has been given to men in which they may be saved. However great civilisations may be which ignore that Name, they inevitably decline, in one respect or another, from the complete notion of civilisation and culture; order and liberty become equally cruel therein. Even an authentically Christian civilisation does not escape many accidental blemishes. Only a Christian civilisation can be exempt from essential deviations.

The relations between culture and the Catholic religion involve, however, as I have said, yet another aspect. If Catholicism is to penetrate culture for the good of the world and the salvation of souls, it is not so that it shall be itself bound to one culture or another, or even to culture in general and its various forms, otherwise than as a transcendent and independent and vivifying force—rather in the manner (but no comparison is adequate) of a spiritual soul subsisting apart, like the "separate intellect" of the Averroists, and imparting its own life to various living things. It *forms* civilisation, it is not formed by it. It feeds on the fruits of the earth, because it dwells on the earth, but it is not of the earth, and it has an essential food which is not a fruit of the earth. All the elements it borrows from human civilisations, the languages of its liturgies, the languages of its preaching, the architecture

² *Ep. ad. Macedon.*, c. III.

and ornamentation of its shrines, the common or precious things assumed by its religious worship, the human wisdom assumed by its theology, the flower of the liberal arts and human poetry assumed by the very sanctity of a Gertrude or a John of the Cross, are each and every one adopted out of compassion, the same compassion which decreed the Incarnation. Jesus ate and drank in the houses of His friends in Bethania; He was received in Bethania: but it was Bethania which received from Jesus. The Roman peace and Roman order were not a condition imposed from below on the divine Incarnation and the propagation of the Church, but a means chosen from above, freely chosen. Not in itself necessary or indispensable, but, rather, on the contrary, deriving its merits only from that free choice. And the Church is indebted to it in the first place for the persecutions and the martyrs. And when that order believed itself to be indispensable to the world, it was shattered.

I have already observed but it is proper to insist upon it: "All religions other than the Catholic religion are in more or less narrow and servile fashion, according as their metaphysical level is more or less elevated, integral parts of certain definite cultures, particularised to certain ethnic climates and certain historical formations. The Catholic religion alone is absolutely and strictly transcendental, supra-cultural, supra-racial and supra-national—because it is supernatural. . . .

"This is one sign of its divine origin. It is also one of the signs of contradiction which until the end of time will be a cause of the passion of the Church, raised like her Master between earth and sky. It is conceivable from this point of view that the world is entering a phase of particularly stern conflicts which may perhaps be compared to the conflicts of apostolic times in the Rome of the Cæsars. On the one hand the non-Christian nations are incapable of distinguishing between their autochthonous culture, with all its human values in themselves deserving of respect and filial piety, and the errors and superstitions of their religions. And Christian universalism will have to show them how such a distinction can be made and how the Gospel respects and superelevates, and by slow degrees transforms, such particular values. The demonstration is, as a rule, not unattended with bloodshed. And the imbecile dogma of positivist sociology, taught in all countries in the name of European science, and according to which every religion is merely the specific product of the social clan (and Christianity therefore a specific product of the European races), will not make it any the easier.

"On the other hand, when faith and charity diminish among the majority in the Christian nations, many come to think that, because Christianity was the vivifying principle of their historic culture it is essentially bound, enfeoffed to it. Certain apostles of Latinity (I bear it no grudge, let me assure them) are convinced—the remark

was made to me one day—that *our religion is a Græco-Latin religion*. Such an enormity is full of significance. Not realising from what spirit they derive, and oblivious of the divine transcendence of what constitutes the life of their life, they end in practice by worshipping the true God in the same fashion as the Ephesians worshipped Diana and primitive man worshipped the idols of his tribe. Christian universalism will have to remind them that the Gospel and the Church, without injuring any particular culture or the State or the nation, yet dominate them all in a pure unsullied independence and subordinate them to the eternal interests of the human being, to the law of God and the charity of Christ. Nor is that demonstration made without opposition.”¹

The Church knows that no civilisation, no nation, has clean hands: *omnes quidem peccaverunt et egent gloria Dei*. But she also knows that all the civilisations and cultures on earth, though born far away from her and in spiritual climates overcast by error, whatever erroneous forms they may involve, endure only in virtue of the good which they contain and are pregnant with human and divine truths, and that the common Providence of God watches over all nations. That is the reason why grace can maintain them all in their particular types, correcting and superelevating each.

¹ *St. Thomas Aquinas.*

III

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

CERTAIN practical consequences affecting our conduct emerge from these considerations. Culture or civilisation, as I observed in the beginning of this essay, is rooted in the soil of natural life, whereas the Church has her roots in the sky of the supernatural life. But a Christian civilisation, even supernaturally superelevated in its order by the Christian virtues and its subordination to the last supernatural end, is still something temporal, essentially terrestrial and therefore deficient, continues to belong to the sphere of nature. We must therefore be careful not only not to confuse the Church with any civilisation whatsoever, but we should also be careful not to confuse the Church in any particular whatsoever with Christian civilisation or the Christian world, Catholicism with the Catholic world. The Church and Catholicism are essentially *supernatural*, supra-cultural things whose end is eternal life. Christian civilisation and the Catholic cultural world remain a civilisation and a world whose specific end, although ordered to eternal life, is in itself of the temporal order.

The Church, the mystical Body of Christ—a supernatural society—has a bond, a supernatural social spirit, which is the Holy Ghost.

By a natural, too natural phenomenon, a return of the *natural social* spirit, let me say, if you like, in memory of Durkheim, a return of spontaneous *sociologism*, may come and sponge upon our consciousness to the extent that we conceive ourselves, in the Catholic community, as in a natural or temporal community—to the point of identifying the interests of Catholicism itself, the cause of the heavenly Father, with “our cause” and the interests of our human group of a Catholic denomination. So far as we do so, we allow our religion to sink, in practice, into naturalism, for the Holy Ghost is not the spirit of any clan or party. And, so far as we do so, we run the risk of shutting the gates of the Kingdom of God against souls and, because of our pride and our own miserable deficiency, making the nations blaspheme the name of the true God. It is immediately apparent how such an error, which consists after all in considering Catholicism *as though it were itself a terrestrial state or a terrestrial civilisation*, and therefore requiring for it and divine truth the same sort of triumphs as for a State or civilisation on earth, is a kind of IMPERIALISM *in spiritualibus* and so related to the error we referred to above, which consists in enfeoffing Catholicism to a terrestrial civilisation and is a kind of NATIONALISM *in spiritualibus*. These two errors derive from one

same source, and I am inclined to believe that they have weighed very heavily upon the history of Christian nations and that it has become a pressing necessity to denounce both alike. Each is a blind delusion under the new law like the blind delusion of the carnal Jews under the old law. Such delusions are expensive.

Catholics are not Catholicism. The errors, apathies, shortcomings and slumbers of Catholics do not involve Catholicism. Catholicism is not obliged to provide an alibi for the failures of Catholics. The best apologetic does not consist in justifying Catholics or making excuses for them when they are in the wrong, but on the contrary in emphasising their errors and pointing out that, far from affecting the substance of Catholicism, they serve only the better to display the virtue of a religion which is still a living force in spite of them. The Church is a mystery, her head is hidden in the sky, her visibility does not adequately manifest her nature; if you seek to know what represents, without betraying, her, consider the Pope and the episcopate teaching the faith and morals, consider the saints in Heaven and on earth, avert your eyes from us poor sinners. Or, rather, consider how the Church heals our wounds and leads us hobbling to eternal life. Leibniz pretended to justify God by showing that the work which proceeded from the hands of that perfect Workman was itself perfect, whereas in reality it is the radical imperfection of every creature which best attests the glory of

the Uncreated. The great glory of the Church is to be holy with sinful members.

It would be impossible to be too careful and tactful in paying practical homage to such truths. It is proper to admire so many *Catholic* newspapers, *Catholic* cinemas, *Catholic* novels which profess with candour and undeniable good-will to be the recognised purveyors of good. Is it not the professed object of every Catholic magazine, especially if it is a young people's paper, to be *the organ of the Catholic revival*, or if it is a review of doctrine, eager also to inform opinion, *to give a complete idea of contemporary Catholic thought and Catholic activity*? That will be apparent when the world comes to an end, and the subscribers run the risk of being somewhat startled.

We should also admire so many Catholic men of letters who are convinced that their works constitute Catholic literature, one might as well say God's literature. Far be it from me to suggest that the operation of grace is incapable of being treated as a theme for fiction or romance; grace is more intimately associated with human life than life itself, and it is impossible for a novelist to consider it as non-existent. What is requisite, however, is that his work shall not diminish the operation of grace, shall respect its transcendence, the profound secret which is characteristic of the divine mysteries. It ill becomes us to judge the divine ways by our standards, even for the purpose of jus-

tifying them after the fashion of Leibniz, Malebranche, and the friends of Job, or of certain works of the imagination which seem to plead the cause of God, as though God needed to be acquitted. His works bear their own justification, are *justificata in semetipsa*; the novel which He has been writing since the world began is terribly free of every apologetic contrivance and every prejudice of spiritual politics. He wrote the Bible as He governs the universe, Himself giving us in those two works the supreme exemplar of all inspired creation.

The truth is, a Catholic writer is tortured and terrified by the thought that Catholicism may, perhaps, be judged by the standard of his own insufficiency. He would rather be taken for a Mahomedan and, as such, pay a tribute of homage to truth and the Church which would run no risk of compromising either. Fortunately, his fellow writers are on the alert and take it upon themselves to secure as far as he is concerned an almost equivalent result.

To speak of more momentous matters. The result of such a temporalisation of religion as that to which I referred a moment ago is mendaciously to transform Catholicism in the minds of those affected by it into a party and Catholics into partisans. Such a transformation appears with most manifest characteristics in the state of mind of anti-Semites, who proclaim the Gospel by a series of pogroms, and people who attribute all the worries of life

to a permanent world-wide conspiracy of the wicked against the good. Another indication of it is to be found in those who seem to consider the conversion of souls as in the first place bringing a strategic reinforcement to an army or as a series of successes to be entered in a score-book. A conversion, however, is not a political or military operation. Operations of that sort, if they lose the ground at first won, are operations which have failed. But the return of a soul to God, even if it should afterwards not visibly persevere, is an event inscribed in Heaven, a testimony valid by itself, a promise whose ultimate fulfilment is beyond our ken. Catholicism is not a religious party; it is religion, the only true religion, and it rejoices, without envy, in every good, even though it be achieved outside its boundaries—for that good is only apparently outside the boundaries of Catholicism, in reality it belongs to it invisibly. *Are not all things, indeed, ours, we who are Christ's?* The expansion of the Kingdom of God has no common standard with any temporal conquest or any temporal victory. If the dragoons of Louis XIV harass and martyrise the Huguenots, nothing is thereby gained for the Kingdom of God. If, in a country oppressed by schismatics, the Catholics gain the upper hand and plunder the schismatics as the schismatics plundered the Catholics, nothing is gained for the Kingdom of God. If the integrity of doctrine or virtue serves only to cement the pride of a faction or a caste, if the object of a certain beneficence is

rather to recruit adherents than to serve poverty, nothing is gained for the Kingdom of God.

An entirely different course of action has been enjoined upon us and the Church herself acts differently. The only proper attitude to adopt in regard to souls is one of service. The example was given once and for all time. As far as non-Christian cultures and civilisations are concerned, those of us who are engaged in studying them find ourselves faced with a delicate problem. We have been content only too often merely to depreciate them; complaisance is no better, it is truth which is necessary, but with love to vivify knowledge. Our ardent desire should be not to destroy such cultures, but to serve them loyally; I mean to say, to help them rediscover whatever authentic elements they may contain of everything that is venerable, wise and true, to purge themselves of their impurities, to disencumber the tothing which invites the building on of more exalted truths. If we do so, they will make ready to receive at the appointed time the visit of the Son of Man. The peculiarly Catholic task is to foster and stimulate the truth everywhere.

The controversy with which we are now concerned is the controversy between what Péguy called mysticism and politics—let us say, in a more precise terminology, between the spiritual and the temporal. As an illustration of this controversy and of what we have said of the transcendence

of the spiritual, consider for a moment the story of the Invincible Armada. A most Catholic King, all Spain in prayer, the defence and promotion of God's cause in the world, the extirpation of heresy in a hotbed: was not another Lepanto a certainty? A puff of wind upon the water and the entire fleet was at the bottom. God took it upon Himself to give the answer. If we believe as we are bound to in the divine government, we must conclude that God, Who in the conduct of history sets before Himself in the first place His Kingdom and His Saints, in this instance most strikingly dissevered the interests of His glory and the interests of the banners which thought to serve it. The merits of the martyrs of Tyburn—and future recoveries of which we have no idea—were doubtless more important to the divine plans than the triumph of the Catholic King. Philip II, the artificial and tormented replica of St. Louis, looks like one of those giant saurians in which some palæozoic phylum finally exhausted itself. All his work seems to me to have a definitely characteristic significance. It puts before our eyes, carried to the extreme at which virtue becomes vice and to a degree of austerity and extravagance which the Middle Ages for all their excesses never erected into a system, the mediæval conception of the temporal as the instrument of the spiritual—but the instrument in this case was so welded to the hand that the hand lost its freedom; is it any wonder that it came to disaster?

The true and living Middle Ages find their most authentic representative in St. Louis. In him the temporal is truly, with all the dignity and humility which such a title involves—supple, free, really ordered and subordinate—the means of incarnation of the spiritual. We have the problem of Christian royalty then rising before us in all its dimensions and proper proportions; and the problem of Christian royalty, considered in the most eminent and purest particular case, is the common problem of *Christian temporal activity*, as it presents itself to each one of us who strive to be faithful while working in the profane world. Considered from the point of view of worldly successes, such work is rather a thankless task. It is the case of a lamb trying to impress its views on wolves. Let us not forget that St. Louis was not a great conquerer, that he failed in his crusades, that he was defeated—but yet not in the same way as Philip II! His repulses, no less than his victories, merely extended still further his power and influence. Because the virtue of the energies of the spirit was really transmitted into the instrument wielded by that king. The temporal then participated in a way in the law of the spiritual, entered into the calculations of that divine arithmetic in which everything is done contrary to common sense, in which the first are the last and the labourers who have done nothing during eleven hours out of twelve receive the same wages as those who have toiled all day.

Here we may usefully find room for a scholastic dis-

inction. There are two functions to be considered in an instrument, its own peculiar causality and its instrumental causality. In the case of the temporal the very subtle relation between these two functions imposes a varying degree upon the endless intertwinements of gains and losses. In the peculiar order of the temporal, so far as the temporal is worth anything by itself, while being ordered to more exalted ends to the extent that it has its own peculiar goods to safeguard, its peculiar virtue to exercise, what counts for the decisive issue is victory or defeat. In this case we ought—yet without ever exalting it above the law of God—terribly to wish for victory; it has a biological importance: as well die as fail to gain it. So far as the temporal acts precisely as the instrument of the spiritual and is useful to the peculiar order of the spiritual, what counts for the decisive issue is not victory in the battle, but the way in which the battle is fought and the weapons employed. Weapons of light! Of truth, loyalty, justice, innocence, let our weapons be unsullied! We shall be beaten, that goes without saying, historians and politicians are right in warning us. But it is impossible to be beaten; when the stake is not biological but spiritual, defeat or victory with unsullied weapons is always a victory.

It is not enough to realise that the things of time must be, on the double ground just mentioned, the means of the intemporal—not a temporal means imposing on the in-

temporal, to ensure its success on this earth, the law of the flesh and sin, for that would be an outrageous prevarication, but a temporal means itself subject to the supreme law of the spirit. It must also be realised that there are an order and hierarchy of such temporal means, I mean, of temporal means good in themselves, legitimate and normal. There is the labour of the soldier and the labour of the ploughman, the labour of the politician, the poet, the philosopher, there are the works of us Christians of the common herd, the works of the saints; there are the works of saints with a mission to discharge, such as the duty of State imposed upon St. Louis or the temporal mission of Joan of Arc, and the works of saints exempt from any such mission.

Well, then, the richer such works and temporal means are in matter, the more they have their own peculiar exigencies, their own peculiar conditions, the more heavily weighted they are. The more also, in accordance with the law just mentioned, do they regularly postulate a certain degree of temporal success. "Whoso loses his soul for my sake," our Lord said, "shall find it again." He did not say: "Whoso loses his kingdom shall save it." St. Louis was an excellent administrator of his kingdom; he increased its power and prosperity. Controlled by the strong hand of the eternal decrees, the Roman soldier was bound to subject the world to his arms and so unconsciously prepared the arena in which the Church had to fight her first battles.

Ever so much more profoundly, what a weight of glory for the temporal was the history of the patriarchs and the long carnal preparation for the Incarnation! A work of time, but of eternal importance, in the least mesh of which God took a personal interest, the paradigm of the natural sanctity, if I may say so, of every successful and well-made work.

We may describe as *rich temporal means* those which, so implicated in the density of matter, of their own nature postulate a certain degree of tangible success. By that very fact the evangelical law of the reversal of values and immolation, which is the supreme law of the spiritual, affects them only imperfectly, and it is the shadow of the Cross which passes over them. Such means are the peculiar means of the world; the spirit, as it were, ravishes them, they do not belong to the spirit; in truth, and in fact, ever since the sin of Adam, they fall within the dominion of the Prince of this world. Our duty is to wrest them from him by the virtue of the blood of Christ. It would be absurd to despise or reject them: they are necessary, part of the natural stuff of life. Religion must consent to receive their assistance. But it is proper for the health of the world that the hierarchy of means be safeguarded and their proper relative proportions.

And there are other temporal means, which are the peculiar means of the spirit. They are *poor temporal means*. The Cross is in them. The less burdened they are

by matter, the more destitute, the less visible—the more efficacious they are. Because they are pure means for the virtue of the spirit. They are the peculiar means of wisdom, for wisdom is not dumb, it cries in the market-place, it is the peculiarity of wisdom so to cry, it must therefore have means of making itself heard. The mistake is to think that the best means for wisdom will be the most powerful means, the most voluminous.

The pure essence of the spiritual is to be found in wholly immanent activity, is contemplation, whose peculiar efficacy disturbs no single atom on earth in order to touch the heart of God. The closer one gets to the pure essence of the spiritual, the more spontaneously tapering become the temporal means employed in its service. That is the condition of their efficacy. Too tenuous to be stopped by any obstacle, they pierce where the most powerful equipments are powerless to pierce. *Propter suam munditiam*. Because of their purity they traverse the world from end to end. Not being ordered for tangible success, involving in their essence no internal exigency of temporal success, they participate, for the spiritual results to be secured, in the efficacy of the spirit.

When Rembrandt painted, when Mozart and Satie composed their works, when St. Thomas wrote his *Summa* and Dante his *Divina Commedia*, when the author of the *Imitation* wrote his book and St. Paul his epistles, when Plato and Aristotle spoke to their disciples, when Homer

sang, when David sang, when the prophets prophesied, these were all poor temporal means.

In the last resort, let us consider the spiritual man *par excellence*. What were the temporal means of Wisdom incarnate? He preached in villages. He wrote no books—that again was a means of action too heavily weighted with matter—He founded no newspapers or reviews. His sole weapon was the poverty of preaching. He prepared no speeches, gave no addresses; He opened his lips and the clamour of wisdom, the freshness of Heaven, passed over men's hearts. What liberty! If He had wanted to convert the world by the great means of power, by *rich temporal means*, by American methods, what could have been easier? Did not somebody offer Him all the kingdoms of the earth? *Hæc omnia tibi dabo*. What an opportunity for an apostolate! The like will never be seen again. He refused it.

The world is perishing of dead weight. It will recover its youth only through poverty of the spirit. To seek to save the things of the spirit by going in the first place to try and discover, in order to serve it, the most powerful means in the order of matter, is an illusion which is all too common. You might as well tie the wings of a dove to a steam-hammer. In the last resort, it is the great modern Minotaur himself, all the gear and strategy of big financial business, which will be entrusted with the task of saving souls; banks will be founded and world-wide trust corporations organised for the worldly success of the Gos-

pel with founders' shares. It would be hypocrisy to deny that the work of evangelisation and every spiritual undertaking need money, as a man needs food. Much money is required for missions, schools and charitable enterprises. But money may be used as a poor temporal means (it is then spent in order to procure things) or as a rich temporal means (it is then used to invent machinery for acquiring more money). With the divine *sans-gêne* of sanctity, the Blessed Cottolengo and his fellows testify to the face of the modern world to what an extent money, even though it pour in in abundance, can yet remain a means of poverty. What makes the modern world so terribly tempting is that it puts forward, it vulgarises so, rich temporal means which are so crushing and oppressive; it uses them with such ostentation and such power as to induce the belief that they are the principal means. They are a principal means for matter, not a principal means for the spirit.

When David resolved to face Goliath, he first tried on the armour of King Saul. It was too heavy for him; He preferred a poor weapon. David was the spirit. Poor Saul, a pitiable figure of the temporal power royally equipped to serve the divine order and fight the Devil! And when David became king, he in his turn sinned. David, however, repented. "Jesus therefore when he knew that they would come to take him by force and make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone." ¹

¹ St. John vi. 15.

IV

OF CATHOLIC THOUGHT AND ITS MISSION

THE intellectual task confronting the Catholic is a difficult task, as difficult as it is important. As a man, he is in time, and subject to all the vicissitudes of becoming; as a member of the mystical Body of Christ, he is joined to eternity; his most fundamental life has its roots where there is no change nor shadow of alteration, his mind is fixed in primal Truth, loyalty to which is the foundation of the whole edifice of grace in him and the primary benefit which every creature expects from him. This sort of mediation between time and the eternal is for the Christian mind at once a sort of painful cross and a sort of redemptive mission. It must at every moment think the passing, changing world in the light of eternity.

Our problem to-day is so to think the modern world; not only to think the eternal outside the world, which is the first precept of contemplative thought, but also by a second precept similar to the first, to think the world and the present moment in the eternal and by the eternal. And this problem is all the more pressing in that all around us we see the temporal forms in which the world of culture

had for centuries received, however haphazardly, the imprint of eternal truths for the most part in a state of collapse and dissolution; this is undoubtedly a grave misfortune, for man is thereby deprived of a multitude of supports which helped him to maintain within himself the life of the spirit; but it is also, in certain respects, an incalculable advantage, for, at the same time, that life—and the very life of the Church of Christ—is disencumbered of the terrible human deadweight with which so many abuses and prevarications had burdened the old once Christian world. A new world is emerging from the obscure chrysalis of history with new temporal forms; it may be, all things considered, less habitable than the old; but it is certain that some good and some truth are immanent in those new forms, and that they manifest in some way the will of God, which is absent from nothing that exists. They may to the same extent serve eternal interests on this earth. The question is to understand this state of the world; and to regulate accordingly our loves and hatreds and our activity.

A double danger, a double error, must here be avoided. We might be tempted to abandon, if not theoretically, at any rate in practice, to lose sight more or less completely of the eternal, to the advantage of time, and allow ourselves to be carried away by the flux of becoming instead of mastering it by the spirit; the truth is that those who do so rather suffer the world than think it; they are acted

upon by the world and do not act upon it otherwise than as instruments of the very forces of the world; they glide like fluttering leaves or sodden tree trunks on the water down the stream of history. They are often generous and forewarned of the exigencies of the moment by the intuitions of the heart, but in their hurry to pursue practical realisations they forget the very first conditions of practical efficacy itself, which are of the spiritual order and presuppose the intellectual courage to strip appearances bare, to grapple with principles and to keep thought centred at all costs upon the immutable.

Upon the plea of fidelity to the eternal, the other error, quite the opposite, consists in remaining attached not to the eternal, but to fragments of the past, to moments of history immovably fixed and as it were embalmed in memory, moments upon which we rest our heads to go to sleep; those who do so do not despise the world like the saints, they despise it like the ignorant and the arrogant; they do not think the world, they refuse it; they compromise divine truths with dying forms; and should they happen to possess a higher intelligence than the former of principles which are unchanging and the most acute perception of the errors, aberrations and deficiencies of the present moment, their learning remains barren, incomplete and negativist, because a certain narrowness of heart prevents them from "knowing the work of men" and doing justice to the work of God in time and history.

The former error is as it were a misconception of the Word by Whom all things are made, and by Whose Cross the world is conquered; it would reduce Christian thought to impotence and mere versatility in the eyes of the world. The latter is as it were a misconception of the Spirit Who hovers above the waters and renews the face of the earth; it would make Christian thought repugnant and hostile in the eyes of the world.

It is difficult to remain absolutely unaffected by one or other of these two errors, not to decline more or less to one side or the other. For it is not a question of an eclectic dosage or finding an equilibrium to balance two weights; exact proportion in this sphere, as in general in the sphere of the virtues, is to be obtained only by eminence, by rising far above opposite excesses. Man achieves it only with the utmost difficulty. The Church, however, goes her way in divine fashion amid the too human thoughts and opposite errors of some of her children; the exact measure of virtue is realised in her in full perfection and the superior unity of divers extremes, more particularly of absolute fidelity to eternal things and sedulous attention to the things of time. However difficult the attainment of such an eminent harmony may be for each of us, we must yet strive to achieve it and there, in our time, for the reasons urged above, is a task of manifest urgency. Every delay opposed to the accomplishment thereof is liable to involve irreparable catastrophes, if not for the Church, who has the

promises of eternal life, at any rate for the world and culture. To guide us in our task we have the teachings of the Popes and the wisdom of the common Doctor of the Church.

By recovering its spirit of conquest and advancing boldly to grapple with fresh problems and to occupy new positions, the philosophy of St. Thomas will help us to transcend an apparent antinomy which presents itself to-day in its regard. On the one hand, we realise that the Church, in recommending that philosophy with insistence, proposes in the first place to recommend her common Doctor precisely as common Doctor, rather than to revive quarrels dividing the schools. On the other hand, we also realise that the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor is so lofty, and so solidly coherent that it cannot suffer the slightest diminution of its specific determinants without losing its efficacy to penetrate reality. The common Doctor is not the commonplace Doctor in whom there is to be found merely what all the others are agreed upon; he teaches us to assume in the principles of a superior unity every truth uttered by the others, and often manifests a peculiar grace in enhancing the value of particular aspects of things.

Well then! The schools will continue to dispute until the end of time; but let us shift our positions and move forward, let us grapple with fresh difficulties, and by those very aspects in which reality is most starkly apparent: then we shall best realise the necessity—under pain of lapsing

into an impotent mediocrity—of maintaining in all their rigour the principles of the greatest assembler of truth the world has ever known and have the opportunity of seeing spontaneously united in the radiance of his pure doctrine minds hailing from the four corners of the earth.

Let there be no mistake. It is the most arduous and serious problems, problems most closely affecting the heart and flesh of humanity, which now press for solution on the Christian mind, as though they had long been kept in reserve for a general assault; what that mind has to face and conquer or assimilate is philosophies, scientific or artistic researches, fashions of thought and culture of a rare technical nature and a precious human quality. It will succeed in its task only if it equips itself with the most formed wisdom, the most exacting science, the most perfect and reliable intellectual harness, the most vigorous and comprehensive doctrine and method. So furnished, it will be able to fulfil its mission, which, as I suggested a moment ago, by the very fact of being a Christian mission is in some sort a crucifying mission. *Quis scandalizatur, et ego non uror?* Catholic thought must be raised with Christ between Heaven and earth, and it is by living the painful paradox of an absolute fidelity to the eternal closely united to the most sedulous comprehension of the anguish of the time that it is invited to work for the reconciliation of the world and truth.

POST SCRIPTA

I

THE FECUNDITY OF MONEY

(Note to pp. 22-23)

I WILL endeavour to define in some further pages which I hope to write in completion of the present essay the sense in which these words are here used. The most summary explanation must for the time being suffice.

Nobody certainly has ever maintained that money is productive *by itself alone*. It is no less certain, on the other hand, that it is not an evil that money should not remain unproductive. What I mean is something quite different.

In theory and in the abstract, a system of association between money and productive labour may easily be conceived in which the money invested in an undertaking represented an owner's share in the means of production, and was used to feed the undertaking, enabling it to procure the needful material, equipment and resources in such a way that, the undertaking being productive and producing profits, a share in such profits should be returned to the capital. No fault can be found in such a scheme.

In reality and in the concrete, this same faultless scheme works in an absolutely different fashion and does harm. In the human judgments which mould the economic system values have in fact been reversed, while the fundamental mechanism has retained the same configuration. Instead of being considered as a mere feeder enabling a living organism, which the productive undertaking is, to procure the necessary material, equipment and replenishing, money has come to be considered *the living organism*, and the undertaking with its human activities as the feeder and instrument of money; so that the profits cease to be the normal fruit of the undertaking fed with money, and become the normal fruit of the money fed by the undertaking. That is what I call the fecundity of money. Values have been revised, and the immediate consequence is to give the rights of dividend precedence over those of salary, and to establish the whole economy under the supreme regulation of the laws and the fluidity of the *sign* money, predominating over the *thing*, commodities useful to mankind.

II

THEATRUM MUNDI

(Note to pp. 16-19, 29-30, 37)

THE Church alone on this earth plays with absolute exactitude and propriety the part of her character, because her part and her character are both divine. As for the world, it is a theatre in which parts and characters rarely correspond.

The secret of history is concealed from us like the secret of hearts. From the point of view of the appearances amid which we move, it may be said—without attaching to the words the slightest suggestion of hypocrisy or dissimulation, but intending rather to designate the reality we conceive to be apparent—that all we know approximately of men is the mask or the character—and the part they play. One sign of the disorder in which life on this earth runs its course, especially in disturbed moments of history, is what may be described as the *confusion of parts* or the discord between the part and the mask or the character. It is Œdipus who buries Polyneices, Antigone who confronts the Sphinx, Phèdre who falls in love with Romeo, and the Moor of Venice who laughs at the sonnet of Oronte. It is

useless to add that such parts are badly played and develop all wrong. An astonishing hybridisation blends the part which his nature in spite of everything insists that he shall play, with the part which the character merely borrows.

At the dawn of modern times, Descartes mounts on to the stage of this world and comes forward masked. "*Hoc mundi theatrum consensurus, in quo hactenus spectator exstiti, larvatus prodeo.*" And I would willingly agree that such a "mask" is his very self, his own believer's face. His philosophy does not correspond with it. The part of the seducer played by the noble father, of the denier by the dogmatist, of the dissolver of the mind by the spiritualist and Christian apologist—three centuries of intellectual history will not exhaust the consequences of the event. In the time of Luther, it was the opposite spectacle which had been witnessed, the part of the reformer was then played by the heretic.

The Church doubtless intervenes when the issue at stake becomes too serious, and discovers to us something of the real character of Luther, of the real part played by Descartes. Reason also can divine what is concealed under the appearance. Nevertheless, the full meaning of the drama invented throughout the course of time by the will of the Creator and that of the creature remains concealed. Who can estimate the number of historical necessities drained by the part assumed by Luther or the authentically Christian remnants in the character of Descartes?

We must wait for the day when all masks will be removed.

Is it a calumny on modern history to observe that such a reversal of order has in the past hundred years assumed enormous proportions therein, more particularly in the social sphere? Yet there was no lack of warnings by great minds, by such an ever faithful Catholic as Ozanam, such a misdirected Catholic as Lamennais. The defence of the poor and the oppressed, zeal for justice, peace and liberty, the crusade against the tyranny of money, against the enslavement of body and soul to economic interests—the earth was strewn with innumerable Christian parts abandoned. They were picked up by the adversaries of the Christian name. It was of the first importance that the play should continue; the producer willed it so, even though frenzied actors were to denaturalise such parts by corrupting the text and perverting the action.

Elsewhere it will be observed that for a century past the part of stimulators turning intellectual milieux towards religion was occasionally more effectively played by great romantic writers or a few “accursed” poets than by the representatives of classic apologetics. Need the part played by the mummy be mentioned? It has long been held by the character “Order and Progress.”

The “parts” mentioned relate after all to what I have described (p. 18) as historical *utility* values: the masks or characters to *truth* values. A character is the bearer of a

name, representative of a form, an idea, a conception of the world; such name and form have in themselves absolute significations, are, considered in themselves, the occasion of truths and errors discoverable above time. Parts and characters are indifferent: it is those forms which are of the first importance. If a mask of iniquity seizes hold of a part of justice, that part is spoiled; and so long as it is spoken by such a mask it will remain more or less spoiled. The attempt may be made to turn to account whatever good it may retain; it is a betrayal to applaud the name under the sign of which it runs its course. If a mask of justice assumes a part of iniquity, it spoils itself and causes the name it bears to be blasphemed: the name itself remains holy. To blaspheme it is madness. In the universal saraband the temporal task of the Christian is unceasingly to try and prevent such a confusion of parts; by striving to become what he is, he frees his own character from parts of iniquity and at the same time recovers the parts of justice from the masks of iniquity.

CRISIS IN THE WEST

By PETER WUST

EDITOR'S NOTE

PETER WUST, whose work here appears in English for the first time, was born in 1884 in the village of Rissenthal in the Sarre country. Of Catholic parents and upbringing, he came later to succumb to the agnostic atmosphere prevalent in Germany at the beginning of this century.

His subsequent development is well illustrated by an incident which M. Charles du Bos recounts in a recent article (*Vigile*, No. 2, 1931): in 1918 Wust went to Berlin and was there received by Ernst Troeltsch. The news of Germany's defeat had just come to hand; Troeltsch, in giving it to Wust, added—"the external catastrophe has come about—but it is only the delayed consequence of our inner weakening since the death of Hegel. Since Hegel's death what have we seen but the gradual draining-away of our native belief in the power of the spirit to mould the world's history?" Whatever may be the truth of that remark, its effect on Wust was to set him at the service of a metaphysic where ontology occupied a central position, as of right, and where man would be no longer that being "severed from his ontological roots and his transcendent objects," described by Maritain in his

St. Thomas Aquinas. At the same time, thanks to the work of Ernst Robert Curtius and Hermann Platz, Wust was making contact with the new tendencies of thought in France. Paul Claudel came to meet him on the road of his philosophical enquiry.

In 1920 appeared Wust's first work, *Die Auferstehung der Metaphysik* (The Resurrection of Metaphysics). Besides a great number of essays and articles he has so far published three other books—*Die Rückkehr aus dem Exil* (The Return from Exile), where he wrote of the enfranchisement of Catholicism from its feeling of inferiority in Germany and its entrance into the full tide of intellectual life. *Naivität und Pietät* (Naivety and Piety) appeared in 1925, and *Die Dialektik des Geistes* (The Dialectic of the Spirit) in 1928.

The introduction to Wust's philosophy given here is based on the last two books. In these the crisis or judgment that is to-day being passed on modern man for the neglect of certain essential aspects of his nature is worked out in full. The essay *Crisis in the West* is only a sketch of a vast subject, but it can well stand by itself and be read independently of the introduction, although the reader will find useful English variations on Wust's theme in Part II (p. 87), where Mr. Watkin makes comparisons between Wust and Wordsworth, Blake, Ruskin, D. H. Lawrence and Coventry Patmore.

T. F. B.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF PETER WUST

By E I. WATKIN

I

THE nature of man is the witness of truth, witness of itself and its origin and of the nature of the universe, a witness whose testimony can never be *permanently* set aside, perverted or silenced. The preconceptions of an individual, a society or an epoch may indeed refuse to admit its evidence—the disregarded witness becomes the judge and passes his sentence of condemnation on those who refused his testimony. Such a judgment is the crisis (here to be taken in its original and literal sense, *i.e.*, judgment) of which Peter Wust writes in this pamphlet.

For centuries Western thought has tended to admit only the evidence of discursive and analytic reason, the *ratio ratiocinativa*, the clear conceptual reasoning of judgment and inference. The deeper, if dimmer, intuition (Wust calls it *Vernunft*, as opposed to the more superficial *Verstand*) which apprehends the hierarchy of values with their corresponding degrees of reality—the primary spiritual facts which the discursive reason must take for granted—

has been rejected as subjective: nothing but human volition, belief or emotion. The result is a logical machine working in a void—a suicidal scepticism, and, finally, the exposure of humanity naked to those sub-rational, vital and animal forces which, however indispensable and valuable in their subordinate place, cannot without disaster take control of a being who, after all, is not, and cannot be, a mere animal.

In one of those moments of illumination when, from the depths of the spirit, the voice of truth makes itself heard above the opposition of an inadequate theory, Mr. Bertrand Russell—distinguishing in man *instinct* (the vital, animal forces and functions), *mind* (the discursive, analytic reason, Wust's *Verstand*) and *spirit* (the profound super-rational intuition, Wust's *Vernunft*)—pointed out that mind, supreme, well-nigh omnipotent in the thought and life of modern man, is by itself a solvent, a destructive force. To escape its ruin man must go forward to spirit, by which he apprehends those deeper values without which no constructive thought or life is possible. Here, for an instant, Mr. Russell's glance exposes the radical defect of modern thought, the danger which threatens modern civilisation. Unhappily he has not been able to maintain that momentary insight. Vaguely conscious that the rationalism to which he had pledged himself so deeply was radically imperilled by his incompatible perception,

and that religion, against which he is so deeply prejudiced, loomed ahead, he has turned his back resolutely on the unwelcome vision and entrenched himself more firmly than ever in his refusal to admit anything beyond the purely formal, atomistic logic of a ratiocination *bombinans in vacuo*.

What for Mr. Russell was a passing and neglected insight is the starting-point and centre of Wust's philosophy. This may be described as a metaphysical anthropology for which man is the measure of all things, not in the Protagorean acceptance that truth is but man's subjective opinion of it (the distinction is made by Wust himself) but inasmuch as his nature reflects every level of reality from mechanical matter to God. And, because his nature thus reflects every level of being, man is able to apprehend every level, though in varying measure. Only the middle levels can be apprehended with any clearness. Of matter at the bottom of the scale of being, or God at its summit, man can only know what they are not, not what they are.

Spirit, as experienced in the contingent and relative human spirit, is relatively creative and personal. Therefore the ultimate ground of reality must be an absolute spirit—absolutely creative and absolutely personal. There is no room for any impersonal substance—whether conceived as consciousness, abstract reason or blind force. Uncompro-

mising theism, such as is taught clearly and consistently by Catholic theology, is thus the primary datum of a metaphysic true to the implications of the psychological human fact.

At the opposite pole is nature as opposed to spirit—a region of determined events which owe their coherence, order and objective rationality to the fiat and control of the Creative and Conserving Spirit.

Between the purely objective sphere of nature and the pure Subject-Spirit, God, lies the human spirit—with whose analysis Wust is chiefly concerned.

It is in man that spirit in the strict sense, creative personality, first appears in the scale of being. Man is a relative creator insofar as he distinguishes the general from the particular aspects of being, thereby freeing himself from bondage to nature's concrete *hic et nunc*, and penetrates to what Wust calls their "inner form," which is practically the "idea" in the Platonic sense. This "inner form" man expresses in the "secondary forms" which he shapes as his self-expression—whether mental (*e.g.*, the concept), or objectivised in word, deed or artefact.

Expressive form is thus the distinctive feature of man as creative spirit. This is, after all, but an amplification of that school of art-criticism which sees in art the manifestation of significant form. In nature, forms are usually so chaotic in their unrestrained luxuriance that they present no significance to human contemplation. The artist selects

from the mass those forms which, to his vision, convey significance (in Wust's phraseology, reveal the inner form). Nature, in favoured moments, performs the task by accident, and we suddenly find in some natural scene, for example a particular effect of sky and trees and a hill-top with horses ploughing, what seems a picture of human workmanship. It is the selection of these natural pictures which distinguishes *artistic* photography from mere record-making. For Wust, though he never formulates it in these terms, man is essentially the artist. He is a creator in the sense that the artist is a creator.

Man also is a relative person, inasmuch as he is conscious of himself as an independent, unique and self-possessed centre of action. He is relatively "*a se*," from himself, inasmuch as he is the original source of his creative activity. God—the absolute Spirit, the absolute Creator, and absolute Person of absolute aseity; Man—the relative spirit, the relative creator, and the relative person of relative aseity: this is the comprehensive formula of Wust's metaphysical anthropology.

But because in man spirit, creativity, personality and aseity are only relative, he is never wholly his own; his *entire* being is never possessed, understood and actuated as an independent self-conscious ego. The ego (the *Ich*) is always bound to something greater than himself and exceeding his comprehension. That something is the order of nature still present in himself, no longer a blind

mechanical order of happenings, but, because it is the nature of a spiritual being, spirit-nature, a force of love which binds man willy-nilly to the cosmic order of which he is a part, and ultimately to the God who created it and him. This spirit-nature, the *it* (the *Es*) in man as opposed to the ego (the *Ich*), is not altogether easy to grasp—the more so because Wust elsewhere *seems* to identify spirit with personality and opposes it to nature. But Wust is the first to admit, indeed to insist, that we are here dealing with something which exceeds comprehension, and therefore clear formulation.

Besides the spirit-nature, the bond and urge of a cosmic love, the *Es*, there is in man a further nature, another *Es*, his physiological life, which belongs as such to the lower nature. For both natures, the *its*, the spiritual and the physiological, are ultimately united in the one body-spirit self. Wust insists on the fundamental unity of man. Its co-existence with the three factors he has just distinguished cannot, he admits, be made fully intelligible.

A complex being—two natures and one ego—yet all three one ego in the strict sense of the term. Wust's meaning is true and important, however obscure his formulation. I will try to make the point clearer: Below man is non-mental nature. Insofar as it is matter it is a non-mental energy.¹ But, as we have seen, it possesses sig-

¹ It is, however, sub-divided into *matter*, in the strict sense—non-living energy, and *life*—living energy. Wust, I think, makes too little of this distinction.

nificance and rationality. Man finds order, rationality and significance in the sub-human world. Wust calls this "objective spirit or mind," as he also calls the significance, the form, imprinted on human artefacts. It is, in short, form. In man the formal principle is a conscious and reasoning ego, the self, actively manifested in *Verstand*. The physiological nature in man, the energy or energies he shares with beings lower than himself, is one "matter" to be informed by the self: the spiritual energy, his higher spirit-nature, is another "matter" which must also be informed by the self-conscious personality. Matter-life, experienced by outer and inner sensation, Wust's *bodily nature*; the spiritual life, immanent in man yet transcendent of man (perceived by *Vernunft*, intuition), Claudel's *anima*, Wust's *spirit nature*; the reasoning self-conscious personality, Claudel's *animus* this is the trinity in unity which composes man.

This formulation will not, I think, do violence to Wust's meaning, though in some points it goes beyond anything he says and supplements what he has left too vague. His meaning is the more obscure because he never states clearly in what sense the self-conscious reason is the ego. On the one hand he tells us that the entire man is the self, on the other it is the reason that is distinctively personal.

To sum up and, I hope, make myself clearer: (i) The entire man is the self; (ii) he is a self in virtue of the relation of his entire nature to the radical ego at the root of

his psychic powers, the apex or *fundus animæ* of the mystics; (iii) *normally* that radical ego is manifested clearly in self-conscious reasoning. It is, however, manifested more obscurely, because passively, in sensation and intuition, most passively but most radically in mystical experience. We may say that the human self manifests itself passively in his sensual and in his spiritual experience, actively in his reasoning and rational volition. Perhaps it would have been better had Wust called the self-conscious reasoning not the ego but the active manifestation of the ego, which is, I think, what he really means.

For Wust the unity of the soul is pre-eminently seen in the phenomena of memory and conscience. In memory because, despite the admittedly pathological phenomenon of dual personality with its double series of memories, it witnesses that the remembered experience belonged to the self which now remembers it. In conscience because conscience witnesses "I am responsible for that past action, because *I* did it, it belonged to *me*." Yet within this one self the three relatively distinct entities—the physiological *Es*, the spiritual *Es* and the conscious ratiocinative ego (roughly Mr. Russell's instinct, mind and spirit) exist in a state of tension. The animal force attracts man to the lower pole of his being where he approaches closest to nature, his "animality," *Animalität*; the spiritual force draws him upwards towards pure Spirit, effecting that bond with God which Wust calls man's "sacredness,"

Sakralität. Hence the tension which moves while it torments the history of man both individual and social, the spring which sets in motion the dynamic or dialectic of the spirit. This tension between the animal-vital and the spiritual poles of man's being, his animal life and his spiritual life (*cf.* St. Paul's antithesis between life in "the flesh" and life "in the spirit" ¹), is founded upon the ultimate metaphysical tension of created being between the poles of nothingness and Absolute Reality. But only in man, *because he is many-levelled*, does this metaphysical tension issue in a practical tension of diverse possibilities and divergent directions.

When spiritual self-consciousness first dawns in man on the background of his double nature, it produces the primary emotion from which his spiritual-intellectual development sets out—astonishment—which from another point of view is reverence, before a Reality—implicitly, at least, God. Our English term "awe" expresses the union of both aspects in one indivisible act. There follows what Wust calls the primary, better perhaps the primitive, naivety—which consists on the one hand in a harmony between the three factors of human nature—the two "natures" and the conscious ego—on the other in a correspondence between man's expression and his nature. This primitive naivety or simplicity—for Wust the terms are co-extensive—cannot be permanent. For it is still an inde-

¹ But St. Paul's life "in the spirit" is *supernatural*.

liberate semi-conscious instinct. As the mind awakes and develops, the conscious reasoning, which is the active manifestation of the ego, must assert itself and transform what was originally instinctive *acceptance*, uncriticised and undifferentiated, into the fully conscious and deliberate possession and expression of a personality.

The goal of the process is the second naivety, in which the harmony between the three factors is restored by the conscious affirmation by the active self of the spirit-nature, the love uniting man with Reality and so with God and the conscious correspondence between his expression and his nature, now thus informed by his personality. To this second naivety, the naivety of the perfectly wise man, who is therefore also the saint, corresponds a piety which is the conscious reasonable counterpart of the instinctive natural piety of the child and the childlike primitive. It involves piety towards oneself, in the first place, that is reverence for the spiritual value of one's own personality, as opposed to the egoism which seeks the superficial profit of the individual—regard for *what* I am by the mediate or immediate gift of God rather than for the fact that it is *I*, not another, who am what I am. "By the grace of God I am what I am" is the formula of piety in this aspect. It further involves piety towards nature as the work and expression of the Creative Spirit, towards one's fellows as members of a spiritual society, and, above all, to God. Were this goal infallibly attained by the individual and by society

the tragedy and tension of humanity would be absent. But, in fact, man's will, free only with the imperfect and preliminary freedom which can deny as well as affirm the power and command of the cosmic love which binds him objectively to God—and the universe in God—may and does go astray during the process from one goal to the other.

Man may choose to identify himself with the animal physiological force. He may, and this is the subtler, more deadly temptation, identify himself with the self-conscious reason, with its clear analytic ratiocination and correspondingly limited aims. Volitionally this is the attitude of "Promethean defiance" which makes man his own end, and treats his secondary aims as absolute values, intellectually the attitude of the "Gnostic" who will accept only what can be logically demonstrated and clearly understood. It is the "false subjectivism" which deflects the true development of the spiritual subject in his apprehension of and integration within the objective order of being into a deification of the subject and, therefore, a self-imprisonment.

As we have seen already, the reason is the active manifestation of the self, the subject of experience. To confine oneself to the sphere of reason is to confine oneself to the active form of the subject while rejecting the sensible, or, at any rate, the spiritual reality it should inform. It is the noetic counterpart of the egoism which values the subject

as such, that my and mine which for the mystic is the soul's deadliest foe. It is the subjectivism which of its nature condemns an individual or an epoch to emptiness.

*"Il faut payer par la tristesse, la désolation, l'orgueil d'avoir pensé."*¹ This despairing quotation of a contemporary agnostic is a half truth that just misses its mark. Not the pride of thinking is the cause of modern despair, but the pride of expecting thought to be self-sufficient, the key to reality: the pride which refuses to accept as given the spiritual realities or the sensible material which the activity of the subject can never confine within its own so limited categories, though these, being abstracted from and determined by an external reality, give us knowledge of being, within their scope of reference. When I conceptually explain, I make the object of thought to that extent mine—*master* it, so to speak, by my activity. When I accept what I cannot clearly explain I passively receive what is at the same time beyond me and realise the presence of the transcendent. To accept only the former and refuse the latter is therefore the pride of an impossible self-sufficiency. We ought, indeed, to explain everything we can—a false passivity would be but a slothful quietism—but always humbly accepting experience which escapes our comprehension—that is, in fact, all the ultimates of experience.

The will being free, man is never compelled to take the

¹ E. L. Woodward, *The Twelve Winded Sky*, p. 68.

wrong path. Indeed, Wust goes so far as to say that man, in virtue of his free will, retains habitually a "universal determinability or adaptability" which enables him to start in another direction at any time. This we think exaggerated—the power of native disposition being more than the simple emphasis of one aspect of interest, attention or activity to which Wust would reduce it. But, granting as we must that free will is never lost, and that within the limits of his vision and powers of execution man can turn his will in another direction, in practice man will choose wrongly even against his lights. The effects of his free will become, Wust points out, a doom, or fatality, which it is hard, though never impossible, to resist. If, therefore, man chooses to entrench himself within his ego and its *clear* perceptions, thus deifying his individual purposes and the notions he can prove, he will not attain that final balance of his nature, and that simple trust in God and His world which must necessarily exceed clear understanding that constitute the secondary naivety and ultimate piety of the saintly soul. He will, indeed, be unable to resist the objective order of the universe and of his own soul, which will automatically avenge itself in his frustration, dissatisfaction and interior disharmony. "He must pay for his pride by sorrow and desolation." But subjectively he has failed.

Man, however, is not a solitary individual. Just because he is a unique partial representation of God, and because

his disposition inclines him to one-sided emphasis of one aspect or value of reality, he is intrinsically a social being, a member of a community of fellow spirits. This community, "*nexus animarum*," is constituted by three factors. There is a "*commercium spirituale*," or "intellectual intercourse," mediated by a common world of expression and significance, mankind united by common languages and art-forms, by a common logic and corpus of sciences; in general, by mutual understanding, its methods and its instruments. There is a "*motio physica*," a nexus of physical inter-relationship—men share a common physical environment which renders them physically dependent one on another. And there is a "*motio metaphysica*" or inter-relationship of wills. No man can achieve any purpose whatsoever by himself. The volitions of other men, either in present actuality or in their effects, condition mine. For in these three forms this bond of souls embraces time as well as space, binding one generation with another as well as the members of each generation between themselves. In virtue of this triply-constituted communion of spirits, the free choices of the individual become for good or evil the objective destiny of his fellows. After his death not only do the effects of his choices remain, but insofar as they are incorporated in objective works—institutions, writings, works of art, speculative systems, etc.—they constitute an "objective spirit or mind," which, when brought into contact with the living intelli-

gence and will of others, lives again for them as a force influencing for good or evil their own deeds and achievements.

Moreover, every human spirit, being unique, makes a unique contribution to this Kingdom or Society of Spirits. Every soul reflects and represents a unique aspect of the Infinite Spirit of God, which thus, for its complete human reflection and representation, requires the entire society of human souls from the first to the latest born.

Although the steady addition to the kingdom of souls of new spirits, and the steady addition to the sum of human achievement from generation to generation, constitute a unilateral progress throughout human history, that progress is from another point of view broken and turned about, as though by a natural fatality, rectilinear progress bent to a circle resembling the "everlasting return" of nature, through the operation of that "false subjectivism," impious self-glorification and proud rationalism refusing to accept what is not clear to the limited reasoning of the human ego, which, infecting society as a whole, in virtue of the triple nexus just described, carries it away from its goal of pious union with God and the world in Him to the *cul-de-sac* of an intellectual and spiritual void and anarchy. For the order of values has been rejected, and the forms of being decomposed by the disintegrating analysis of a ratiocination (*Verstand*) cut adrift from the synthetic view of intuition (*Vernunft*). The metaphysical intuition which

apprehends the integral values and fundamental forms of being beyond the comprehension of the analytic and discursive reason is conditioned by an attitude of faith, being, indeed, a sacred contact with the Divine, the reception, so to speak, of a natural revelation of God to the soul; and this attitude of faith, the piety which is the bond and cement of human knowledge and social order, must fail a society dominated by this rationalist and subjectivist current. Moreover, since the discursive reason is by itself an empty form and the ego cannot affirm itself in the void, when man has turned away from his metaphysical-spiritual pole to which the spirit-nature, that energy of spiritual love, with its direction to God and his integral universe of being and value would attach him—the pole of “sacredness” or “piety” (here *Sacralität* and *Pietät* may be taken as identical)—he must inevitably turn to the vital-physiological pole of his animality. Reason now becomes a mere tool in the service of a vital egoism, the brutality which wars for power and the means of enjoyment, the luxury which is more bestial than the pleasure of brutes because, unlike theirs, it is not restrained by the limits of natural well-being. As we have seen already, the pious man values himself simply as what God has made him, the impious as himself, the subject for his own sake. Hence an impious society must be a complexus of self-affirmations—never inwardly reconciled—however self-interest may dictate external co-operation. Though the objective *nexus animarum*

is as indestructible as the order of nature to which it belongs, subjectively it is denied, and love becomes at most a pleasure of the body, a satisfaction of the desire for power or a bond of mutual self-interest. Thus the loss of piety is for society and individual alike the loss of man's *raison d'être*—the reduction of his life to emptiness and irreconcilable discord.

“Godliness” (piety, εὐσεβεία) “is profitable for all things having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” The truth of this text, which might serve as a summary of Wust’s message—piety being understood in that complete sense in which he takes it—is thus visible in the intellectual, spiritual and cultural decadence which follows upon the loss of piety. Such a process is sketched in this pamphlet—and the possibilities of its arrest discussed. Living faith in God as the Source of Reality—the perception of that reality as a whole with its values—gradually disappear. Since the incomprehensible facts revealed naturally by God through the intuition; primary values, first principles, the soul, God himself, and the “inner forms” even of material objects are denied because they are not to be explained in terms of discursive reasoning, that logical reason is left alone with its relentless analysis which “murders to dissect.” Correspondingly all understanding is lost of that sanctity which attaches to objects, to “things” as created by God and therefore a scripture written by His hand, an “objective spirit” reflect-

he himself points out, compels man to advance by action and reaction—a too exclusive advance in one direction followed by an equally exclusive advance in another. Moreover, he seems to me to undervalue the positive aspect of the rationalist and secularist movement. In his *Dialektik* he points out the evils which attend a too exclusive trust in intuition (*Vernunft*) to the detriment of discursive reason (*Verstand*). And may it not be that the ages of faith, too *exclusively* pre-occupied with the realities which exceed rational comprehension, God and the soul—St. Augustine, the typical representative of this movement, would know nothing besides—neglected too much the more superficial but necessary sphere in which the critical analytic reason is at home? Nor perhaps is the circle of complementary reactions after all a circle. We would rather regard it as a spiral returning to a higher point than that from which it set out. The religious movement of Christianity, for example, as Wust would be the first to allow, did not simply repeat and restore the religious movement of antiquity destroyed by the earlier secularism which began with the Sophists. Thus the combination of the two movements of human history pointed out by Wust, the rectilinear and the circular, results in a series of spirals, a spiral staircase by which, if humanity ascends slowly, still it ascends. But, however this may be, Wust has certainly laid bare the mortal disease of modern civilisation, and the radical insufficiency of rationalism, whether as an

epistemological method or a practical guide. He has shown how it has severed man from the universe, from his deeper self and from the God who made and reveals Himself in both. And he has firmly grounded his diagnosis in a metaphysic which, centred in man's nature *in its totality*, presents a synthetic view of God, nature and man, deep enough to do justice to man's deepest perceptions and needs and wide enough to embrace, as by a bird's-eye view, the movement of history, as it reflects and reveals the inner movement, the dialectic of the human spirit.

In the magnificent introduction to his *Dialektik des Geistes* Wust depicts humanity as an ocean tossed ever to and fro, as he explains later, by the conflicting powers of his being, his animal nature, his spiritual nature, and his active reasoning ego. But that ocean is not like the primal-chaos ocean of Babylonian myth—its boundaries have been established from the beginning by the hand of its Creator who “walketh above the waves of the sea” and whose Wisdom “gave the sea its bound that the waters should not transgress His commandment.” The objective law of spirit-nature, as Wust is careful to insist, is not to be broken by man's subjective errors and sins. And, after all, this human sea may prove a mighty stream flowing surely, if slowly, into the pacific ocean of God's kingdom of spirits. “Their waters roared and were troubled: the mountains were troubled with their strength.” But “the stream of the river maketh joyful the city of God.”

II

In this essay Wust, as a German writer, takes the bearings of his thought relatively to German writers and thinkers—as Goethe, Dilthey, Herman Hesse and Max Scheler. For English readers it may be helpful if we compare him with Wordsworth, Blake, Ruskin, D. H. Lawrence and Coventry Patmore.

Wordsworth, like the other romantics, represents a revolt against rationalism, and what Wust says in his pamphlet of the German romantic movement is applicable to its English counterpart. But Wordsworth is of peculiar significance for the student of Wust because he represents and stresses what Wust means by piety (*Pietät*). His reverence for things, for human ties, for the soul, as vehicles of a divine power is precisely what Wust describes and demands. And, like Wust, he finds this piety pre-eminently in children and simple peasants. In fact, Wordsworth's position would be altogether satisfactory were it not that in his creative epoch he tends to a vague pantheism which treats the vehicle of divine immanence as the body of a purely immanent world-soul, and when, later, he decisively adopted Christian theism, his choice was rather a reaction from revolutionary excesses than the internal development of his original perception. However his poetry at its best remains perhaps the best English commentary on Wust.

Blake represents the deliberate rejection of discursive reason (the *Verstand*) in favour of intuition or, as he called it, imagination or inspiration. On the one hand, he is a powerful witness against the tyranny of "rational demonstration" taken as the sole criterion of truth, on the other hand, he proves the danger of the contrary excess, its total rejection. His work comments on and justifies the chapter in which Wust describes the powers and limitations of *Vernunft* and its need to be "policed" by the *Verstand*. Blake refused that control and became unbalanced, inconsistent, finally almost unintelligible. But he supports and illustrates Wust in emphasising the intrinsic connection between egoism and rationalism, in insisting on a return to the simplicity of childhood and in noticing the femininity of intuition (he calls it man's emanation) and the masculinity of the reason (man's spectre).¹

From Ruskin we can expect no metaphysical contact. He shared to the full that dislike of metaphysics which, as Wust shows, has proved so fatal to "modern thought." It is in his insight into the process of secularisation begun at the Renaissance, his view of the inner decadence masked by a superficial progress, that Ruskin stands by Wust's side. In particular he saw the fundamental weakness of the romantic movement as Wust sees it, its lack of religious faith. Like Wust, he bitterly opposed the mechanical industrialism of modern civilisation with its divorce from the realities of life and nature and, like him, understood

the supreme necessity and value of piety in Wust's sense of the term, the piety of the simple peasant. His *Praeterita* is largely the loving and sorrowful record of pieties vanished. Indeed his entire life-work was a protracted and unsuccessful battle against the decay of piety in the modern world. His chapter on Modern Landscape (*Modern Painters*, Vol. 3, Ch. 16) anticipates, some seventy years earlier, Wust's lament over modern faithlessness. "The profoundest reason of this darkness of heart is, I believe, our want of faith. There never yet was a generation of men, savage or civilised, who taken as a body so woefully fulfilled the words 'having no hope and without God in the world' as the present civilised European race. A Red Indian savage has more sense of a Divine existence round him, or Government over him, than the plurality of refined Londoners or Parisians. . . . Nearly all our powerful men in this age of the world are unbelievers; the best of them in doubt and misery, the worst in reckless defiance, the plurality in plodding hesitation, doing, as well as they can, what practical work lies ready to their hands." And his criticism of Sir Walter Scott, taken as the typical British representative of the Romantic movement, confirms almost verbally Wust's account of the romantic reaction, as exemplified by Goethe. His attack upon modern industrialism and economics is based upon its blindness to the sacred element in things, its refusal to admit values not to be reduced to quantities, its treatment of men as money-

getting and money-spending machines; and his criticism of contemporary "science" is for a similar blindness whereby it hoped to explain things by the quantitative analysis of their material—all effects and manifestations of the denial of faith and intuition. But Ruskin, starting with an inadequate religious system, and, as we have seen, *rejecting metaphysics as subjective cobwebs*, was vanquished in his struggle with the age, lost his own faith and went down in despair and madness, fighting to the last against the triumphant self-satisfied rationalism that he did not know how to overcome. The tragedy of Ruskin is the epitome of that tragedy of western culture which Wust depicts.¹ Moreover it confirms his insistent diagnosis that the rejection of an objective metaphysic is the radical error of modern rationalism.

Not altogether unlike is the lesser but yet very real tragedy of a more modern writer, who has battled against the mechanical valueless civilisation of the modern world—the late D. H. Lawrence. His witness endorses Wust's revolt against the deification of the discursive reason. "Real knowledge comes out of the whole corpus of the consciousness. The mind can only analyse and rationalise, set the mind and reason to cock it over the rest, and all they can do is to criticise and make a deadness. I say *all* they can do." In fiery, indeed hectic tones (as Wust points out, reaction is necessarily one-sided) Lawrence denounces the emptiness of the rationalist talking in the void and

¹ Cf. Wust's account of the "tragedy" of Dilthey, below, p. 118 *seq.*

the utterly hopeless deadness of the civilisation he has produced. His attack on industrialism and machinery is indeed the echo of Ruskin's. But whereas both agree in a diagnosis of the disease which is substantially Wust's, they differ as to the remedy. Where Ruskin gropes in the dark, Lawrence is sure and, seizing upon a half truth, demands a return to life-living intuition and the reality it grasps. But of the life and intuition of spirit, the *Vernunft*, he is ignorant. By a fatal error he confuses it with the abstractions of conceptual reasoning—the *Vernunft* with the *Verstand*. He thus approaches by a different route Bergson's identification of instinct and intuition and repeats Rousseau's demand for that return behind the natural awakening of humanity whose inherent impossibility Wust explains. Nor is he true to his own maxim, as enunciated in my quotation, for he seeks the real knowledge which he rightly opposes to conceptual abstractions not, as Wust, from the metaphysical avenue of spiritual intuition but only from the lower physiological avenue of sense. Thus for Lawrence the sole life to be lived is the life of physiological nature, the only "real knowledge" its sensual perception, Russell's instinct. This life and perception he finds in their purest, most intense form in the experience of sex with its strange *mystique à rebours*, an ecstasy of union with the lower vital nature, an ecstasy, therefore, which mimics the higher ecstasy of union with the life of Spirit. Hence "his ending" too "is despair," for though he certainly attains life and reality they cannot satisfy the

demands of a spirit or do justice to the total witness of human nature. His inadequate solution however may help us to understand the completeness and necessity of the integral solution propounded by Wust.

But there is another teacher who never surrendered to modern "rationalism," and, however impotent his voice to shake the solid bulwarks of the foe, never yielded an inch of his ground. Fragmentarily, almost allusively, and with meaning veiled in enigma, myth and allegory, Coventry Patmore proclaimed the bankruptcy of analytic reason and mechanical science as a philosophy for individual or social life. The permanent need of piety, the witness of the soul, the objective reference of man's spiritual intuition, with due respect also to his physical nature and its experience—everything for which Wust raises his voice in the arid wilderness of chatter and machinery which maddened Ruskin and dismayed Lawrence is championed in Patmore's abrupt, broken, often cryptic utterances. "A strange age of 'science' in which no one pays the least attention to the one thing worth knowing—himself! . . . It was not always so. *Scire te ipsum* was the maxim of all ancient philosophy; the stupidest little Greek knew more of man and therefore of God who is 'very man' than . . . all our men of science put together." These words might almost have been written by Wust. "Exclusive study of material facts seem to lead to an absolute *hatred* of life. 'Science' makes a boast of death and the dryness of its bones. What the world calls Mysticism

is the science of self-evident Reality which cannot be reasoned about because it is the object of pure reason or perception. Rationalism begins at the wrong end: Religion rationalises from the primary and substantial Reason and explains all things. Rationalists take zero for their datum and, do what they may, they can make nothing of it."

But perhaps there is no more forcible presentation of Wust's case or one that makes it easier to understand than the story told by Martineau to Baron von Hügel and related by him in his Edinburgh address on the "Central Needs of Religion." ¹ An American propagandist of rationalism who had come to doubt his position, asked advice from Martineau. At Martineau's suggestion, he spent respectively six months among the Catholic peasantry of Westphalia (that *milieu* of traditional Catholic piety of which Wust speaks in this pamphlet and which surrounded his own childhood), and six further months among the rationalist medical students of Berlin. He reported from the former, ignorance, roughness, superstition, bigotry, but in face of the fundamental realities of life "a depth of insight, an assurance of action, an at-homeness of conviction, a magnificent swiftness, purity and massiveness"; from the latter "wide knowledge, polish, suppleness of mind, tolerance," but in face of those same realities "the nimble 'enlightened' students were utterly helpless, without insight, action, conviction of any kind." Here, in a

¹ F. von Hügel: *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd Series.

nutshell, we have piety accepting realities beyond the comprehension of the discursive reason and the rationalist enlightenment which rejects them. Not all the gain on one side, neither by itself completely satisfactory. But can we hesitate for a moment where the balance lies? The former group represents Europe before the enlightenment, at the beginning of the process depicted by Wust, the latter Europe at its close.¹ God grant us a Europe uniting the values of both. But a deep well is better than a shallow pool. For the well merges at its base into the subterranean waters, the narrowest² form of religion communicates with the infinity of God.

Perhaps the testimony of these witnesses against what the historian Guglielmo Ferrero has called the substitution of quantitative for qualitative civilisation may help English readers to appreciate Wust's diagnosis of that process, its causes, and its possible cure, as he states it in the present essay; and may induce them to study in his other works the philosophy on which that diagnosis is based and by which it is more fully explained.

¹ Of course this is but a very rough statement. Discursive reasoning achieved *enormous* triumphs in the Middle Ages. We have only to think of St. Thomas. It was, however, confined to certain aspects of the intellectual life and to a comparatively small élite. The masses were frankly barbarous. Moreover, the scholastic movement represents, in one aspect, the birth of rationalism, though a rationalism still controlled and integrated by faith and intuition. With the nominalists the work of disintegration had begun.

² Narrow in its exclusion of non-religious interests or blindness to the positive values in other creeds.

I

HUMANITY DURING THE CLASSICAL AND CHRISTIAN ERAS. THE FIRST TWO PHASES OF ITS DECLINE

It is an axiom of modern intellectual history, long accepted as a dogma, that in the course of the great era upon whose last phase we have now apparently entered, man has been discovered as an individual. The truth of this proposition need not be disputed. Only we must add that by this discovery of man as an individual is meant man detached—one might even say forcibly torn—from all the sacred elements of being; man, that is to say, who at least subjectively, in his intention and conscious thought, appears as dependent entirely upon himself, to a certain degree *in puris naturalibus*, if we may borrow a well-known theological concept.

A closer inspection of this modern type of man—entirely self-dependent and self-aware—especially in that ultimate form which we meet with everywhere to-day, is, to be frank, productive of grave uneasiness. No longer has he anything of importance in common with that older type of man who still remained within the bosom of the Church, incorporated into the mystic unity of sacrifice and

love. Both in knowledge and will a law unto himself, in his self-sufficiency he repels even the Hand which, stretched forth lovingly from out the obscure background of life, affords or at least proffers, the possibility of redemption even to the most hardened hearts.

Hermann Hesse recently typified the outlawed humanity of our day by what is by far the most impressive symbol yet conceived. He shows us man under the form of a *Steppenwolf*, roving restlessly hither and thither in the endless and loveless desert that is Western civilisation, and hideously crying his hunger and thirst for Eternity. A howling, hungry wolf is a natural thing enough, God knows. But a howling human animal, crying for Eternity? What then? Is it not a terrifying metaphysical phenomenon, at which we must shudder with apprehension? Emphatically there is something unique about the howl of pain uttered by the human animal who has lost his bearings and suddenly realises how deeply the metaphysical thorn is driven into his flesh; for it means that henceforth he must reveal that soul which he has failed to reveal in love and in reverence, until now believing it capable of being explained away on materialist, naturalistic or other lines, in a horribly distorted shape.

It will be our ungrateful task to study this metamorphosis of Western man, and to demonstrate that it is since his withdrawal from the unity of the Church that there has gradually been evolved that final type symbolised

by Herman Hesse as the wolf. With this end in view, we shall in the first place endeavour to sketch in somewhat greater detail five leading types of Western humanism. We shall then examine closely the fifth type of the series, that is, the positivist and *historicist*¹ type of our own time, as being that from which a reaction in the direction of a fresh intellectual era seems to-day to be preparing.

On the threshold of Western intellectual developments stands the man of classical antiquity. The assertion sometimes put forward that the man of the classical age is in reality nothing more than the purest form of the rationalist *homo sapiens*, must once for all be emphatically contradicted. We should rather say that the man of antiquity is the *homo naturaliter obœdiens*, man naturally submissive to the sacred sanctions of being. In any case, the puzzling fact remains that the classical type of Western humanity has, up to and including the present day, preserved its mysterious fascination for all who followed after it. It is true that as a type it is non-Christian, or pagan. But it cannot for a moment be denied that even now, in spite of the long development of Christian humanity, spread over a period of two thousand years, classical man still retains an incomparable charm, which never releases those who have once fallen under the spell of

¹ *Historicist*, i.e., regarding objective truth as merely the relative and temporal expression of the historic process [Trans.].

its beauty. The Church herself has never attempted—nor indeed was it possible—to deny the existence of this charm; indeed, she so closely associated herself with the classical type of humanity as to provoke the reproach—even to-day unsilenced—that Catholicism is from one point of view nothing more than the idealised form of the old belief in the holiness of things.

Where, then, is the essence of this wholly mysterious charm to be found? I do not think that it is necessary to go very far afield for the explanation. It is their wholly unique, frankly childlike reverence for things that still to-day brings the two sister peoples and sister cultures of antiquity so very near to us, so that we are conscious of an indefinable pang of regret whenever we look back at them. The ancients—during their best periods at any rate—take things so simply, so sanely, and so genuinely, as natural facts, that, as a result, after more than two thousand years, every rhythm of their verse and their prose, and every line in their plastic art, reveal to us—so aged and anxious and mentally fagged—the dewlike freshness of eternal youth.

Now it may possibly occur to some bright person that at certain periods, notably in the nineteenth century, we too manifested a similar intellectual pre-occupation with the impersonal *thing*, and that it therefore follows—but it is unnecessary to complete this train of thought. Ancient realism and modern positivist materialism are such poles apart that any attempt at a comparison between the two

is bound to appear a systematic profanation of the classical attitude to life.

The decisive factor here is the manner of approaching an object, the purity and the innocence of the eye beholding things. And how wonderfully pure and single must the eye of the ancients have been—up to and including the time of their highest intellectual achievement, at any rate—that they saw things so clearly and with the directness born of reverence; a vision of which we are, unfortunately, no longer capable. For this reason, therefore, we must speak of the pious realism of the ancients as something in complete contrast with the impious, irreverent realism of our positivist age.

This, too, is the reason why all modern attempts to resuscitate the spirit of antiquity have never achieved more than a temporary and superficial success. For it is precisely the objective piety of the classical outlook that is essential to the success of all such attempts at resuscitation. And that outlook cannot so easily be recaptured.

The foregoing remarks have already indicated the lines on which we are to seek for the essence of classical humanity. I would like to inform sophisticated twentieth-century free-thinkers that the pagans of old had at least this "natural piety," and we have lost it. "Yes," they may reply, "but they prayed to Zeus and Poseidon and to a multiplicity of gods, and that was folly." Of course it was folly; but the actual prayer itself was not folly. On the

contrary, it was the ancients' supreme act of childlike wisdom. Their whole life was fashioned and hallowed to a liturgy, and from thence it derived its sheer greatness and its monumental quality, and that character of sacredness before which even to-day we still feel ourselves obliged to linger in reverence, for from the flame of that unique consecration a spark yet glows. Classical humanity still stood for a realism that was naturally religious, at any rate before scepticism and profanity (ἄσέβεια) had as yet made their appearance, and before the noble unity of a civilisation based upon natural religion had dissolved in decay and corruption.

One thing, however, we must not forget in our review of ancient man. It would be a mistake to fall into the one-sided sentimentalism of the school of Winckelmann and yield credence to the belief that the realist and cosmic optimism of the ancients was, after all, so utterly pure and unalloyed. Every type of humanity, as soon as it develops a serious side to its nature, becomes overshadowed by the cloud of pessimism. And, therefore, even the divinely joyous ancients dimly apprehended that sin and guilt, sacrifice and salvation are things that belong to mankind universally. They did not, it is true, plumb the depths of the soul; indeed, it was this very lack of profound and accurate spiritual knowledge that for so long made them resemble grown-up children. Yet their slumber was broken by flashes from these dangerous spiritual depths. This is

apparent in their myths and mysteries, most forcibly perhaps in the tremendous legend of Prometheus. In this, as if by some secret instinct, they—the noble, grown-up children—touched upon those final mysteries of the spirit which reveal themselves to us in their most impressive form in the phenomenon of titanic self-glorification.

Now, when the decline of the earliest type of Western civilised humanity set in, or to all intents and purposes had become an accomplished fact, there suddenly occurred in the very midst of this decadence the most astounding miracle of all time—the appearance of the *homo perfectus*, the *homo absolutus*, the spiritual ancestor of humanity. Halfway through the decline of classical civilisation that event took place, which, seen with the eye of faith, must be regarded as the most revolutionary occurrence in the entire history of the world.

We are to-day, one and all, too apt to forget the fact that history, in its deepest sense, does not consist merely of secular happenings, but that it is always at the same time a sacred process, a spiritual happening. For it is only on the surface that history is a *motio physica* of wars, battles, national disorders, political catastrophies, and so on. Below, in the depths that are accessible to the mind alone, it is a truly majestic *motio metaphysica voluntatis*, a passionately stirring will-drama of the spirit. And, if this is so, then the really decisive factor in this will-drama will be that tremendous tension which continually exists in

one form or another between the organism, compound of all human wills, and the absolute Will of God.

Now we learn from revelation that in the dimness of remote antiquity human history began with just such a grave tension, revealing precisely that dialectic movement which we experience to-day. As a result of the first transgression, the spirit of discord suddenly precipitated itself into the head of the human organism. At the same time a tremendous upheaval of the human organism as a whole occurred, which effected a sweeping change in the aboriginally clear and straightforward relation between God and man. As a result, a greater atonement became necessary, an ἀνακεφαλαίωσις or reintegration of the race under a new head, that the disharmony arising out of the first fault might be removed.

The most truly epoch-making occurrence of that sacred history which is wrought in the depths of the human spirit, the action that was to bring this state of tension to an end, took place in the midst of time. It was Christ's act of redemption. Since, however, we have lost our understanding of the metaphysics of history, this fact of redemption—in reality of central historical importance—will scarcely appear to us as historical. This was not always the case. At first, of course, in the actual moment of its accomplishment, this spiritual and sacred event was recognised in an act of faith by but a few people. Yet this handful immediately began to diffuse such a glow of faith that, as if by

a single great miracle, henceforth continually operative, the sun of Christianity rose out of the dark night of paganism, and an entirely fresh chapter of history was begun.

Now it is a very remarkable thing that the greater the degree of responsiveness manifested by humanity towards this supernatural fact disclosed by revelation, the greater became its capacity for plumbing the depths of human nature, that ultimate background hitherto veiled in darkness of all human history. As Dilthey once observed, it is the dimensions of his history which best teach man his nature. This dictum is even more profound than a *historicist* like Dilthey could realise. And it is therefore best verified in the record of the progress made by Christian self-knowledge. Once the Christian world of the first centuries had set itself energetically to work to view human history in its entirety—to contemplate with the eyes of faith that portion of history which until then had remained hidden from the eyes of the understanding—the whole fundamental essence of human nature, which had hitherto been shrouded in obscurity, was suddenly lit up.

This, then, was the quite unique and marvellous achievement of Christian humanity; the childlike cosmic realism of the ancients was not destroyed, but most admirably completed and perfected by a *supernatural* realism hitherto unknown. As a result, the whole architecture of being stood suddenly revealed with startling clearness before the eye of the Christian. This eye, with the strengthened

visual power imparted to it by faith, now not only perceived the aspects of this world with a far greater depth of spiritual insight than the ancients had possessed, but also discovered, as never before, that most profoundly spiritual structure of humanity whose lines prolong themselves to eternity. It is true that Buddha also possessed an insight into this spiritual depth. Nevertheless, his view of the world, measured by the Christian's depth of vision, was nothing more than a dim conjecture of the ultimate mysteries of the soul. With Christianity came to the human spirit a full awakening, and the vision of the far horizon of human self-knowledge. Christian self-knowledge meant the discovery for the first time of the complete extent of man's metaphysical structure, and of the entire actual and potential range of his history.

Unfortunately at the present day—so great has been the aberration of the human mind—the man who upholds such a thesis at once exposes himself to ridicule. It is the crying scandal of the modern mind, which owes its present Promethean greatness to the spiritual and intellectual awakening of humanity affected by Christianity, that it has scarcely kept in remembrance even the actual historical fact of the discovery of all those spiritual continents which were then opened up for the first time.

It is specially noticeable in this connection that the Christian discovery of the spirit was not originally undertaken as a purely theoretical task with that intention. On

the contrary, Christians had from the very beginning scarcely any other purpose in view beyond the solving of the purely practical problem of their adjustment, in the light of their faith, to the new objective world presented by revelation, in order that they might generate a new being within themselves. Their main task was the creation of the new man by his incorporation into a supernatural reality. And then, out of this new life by faith, there developed a new vision as well, and, simultaneously, the complete whole that is the Christian culture of the Middle Ages.

This phenomenon—full of instruction for our contemporaries—is most clearly perceptible in the history of mediæval ethics. Alois Dempf and Othmar Dittrich have recently pointed out that the ethical theory of the Middle Ages, which penetrates far more deeply than modern ethics into the personal foundations of man, is actually explained by this unquestioning preference of practical life to all theory. It was primarily by actual religious practice that man learnt to what profound depths theoretical ethics must penetrate before it can attain such fundamental phenomena as, for instance, freedom. The same thing applies to mediæval mysticism, and already to-day it is safe to assert that since we have lost both faith and practice we have become blind to all the wealth of spiritual experience.

At bottom, however, the primarily religious orientation of mediæval man was already foreshadowed by the naturally religious *pietas* of the ancients. It was simply raised

) from the natural to the supernatural plane. Belief in the supernatural mysteries of revelation now transformed the naturally religious attitude of the ancients towards immanent being into a piety that was in the strictest sense at once natural and supernatural. From this it follows that in spite of everything there exists a far more intimate spiritual relationship, from the point of view of religion, between the Christian of the Middle Ages and the man of antiquity than between the man of antiquity and one of us moderns. It almost seems as if a single great wave of faith welled up out of antiquity and spread over the Christian humanity of the Middle Ages, receiving, to be sure, at this latter stage, after the short interval of classical scepticism, a purely supernatural dynamism.

It is just this spiritual affinity between the classical man and the mediæval Christian, inasmuch as both recognised the paramount importance of religion, that we must keep well in view if we are to grasp in all its bearings the transition to the specific forms assumed by modern humanity. For the decisive factor in this great process of reversal is the loss, despite the resumed familiarity with the spirit of antiquity which characterised the Renaissance, not merely of the supernatural religion proper to mediæval Christianity, but also by degrees of the natural religion of the ancients. The revolution that produced our modern type of humanity is, judged by its final effects, in the last resort a radical rejection of piety in any shape or form.

It is true that in the Sophist movement antiquity had already suffered the first impact of a similar form of spiritual *tantalism*. But this first tentative rationalism was incapable of completely subverting the piety of the ancients. Even through Stoicism, the most pronounced system of classical rationalism, there runs a clearly perceptible vein of the old religious dynamic. So much is this the case that even a man of the world like Cicero, when compared with a certain type of modern intellectual, is most emphatically a religious man. At the moment, however, when the complete disintegration of the old piety seemed dangerously imminent, there had already set in the new and infinitely stronger current of Christianity—stronger in that it drew upon a supernatural force—and thus, out of the flagging classical spirit was generated the new spring of a new spiritual age.

But with the appearance of the specifically modern type of humanity there suddenly comes into existence a really unique situation, as a result of the twofold work of destruction which now begins to go forward. For the first time there arises the tremendous danger of a collective annihilation of religion, both of the natural religion of the ancients and of the natural-supernatural religion of mediæval Christianity. We are now in a position to appreciate quite clearly the peculiar significance of that terrible howling of the wolf-man who appears at the end of this long process of development. The axiom *corruptio optimi pessima*

applies to collective history as well as to the history of the individual. The fall of the saint is a very different matter from the fall of the average man. In the same way mankind's fall from the lofty spiritual height of the Middle Ages must be in another category altogether from that of the ancients, for their religious level was, after all, but a natural one. The howling of the wolf that we hear to-day is, therefore, the distinctive cry for help uttered by the man who feels by instinct that he has lost both the classical and the Christian piety, the cry for help of a man who, as a metaphysical being, now feels himself really cheated out of the ultimate reason for his existence. It is the cry of the man, now self-dishonoured and spiritually bankrupt, who may perhaps rapturously await the approach of a new revelation, but who, after the absolute revelation of Christianity, will await it in vain. In this way he may come to feel that unless he himself returns to the Christian message, the universal defeat of the human spirit will draw appreciably near. And in all this is to be found the element of metaphysical terror which is voiced in his very cry of distress. For that cry is itself a self-manifestation of the metaphysical depths which exist even in this man who is spiritually bankrupt; and the irony of it is that such a man is always incapable of interpreting this unconscious metaphysical manifestation of his own being in the one and only sense in which it is susceptible of interpretation. Here we find verified, almost literally, the profound ideas which,

in 1849, in his work, *Sickness unto Death*, Kierkegaard propounded to the entire nineteenth century, as if in a single great sermon after the manner of Savonarola. We can, indeed, truly say that the crisis of the spiritual sickness is reached when the dying man no longer recognises himself as moribund. It is the point where the paroxysm of fever turns, as it were, into spiritual delirium.

Three distinct phases of this peculiarly modern development of humanity must now be distinguished. In the first of these the supernatural idea of God gradually grows dim, and slowly but surely the supernatural order of life fades from the field of vision. This process extends from the beginning of the Renaissance to the Deism of the eighteenth century. The second phase is the comparatively short interlude formed by the German idealism of Goethe's day. We ourselves are in the final phase. This evolves a positivist and historicist humanism and ends with the total uprooting of man.

It should be borne carefully in mind that it is during the course of the first phase—during the development, that is, from the Renaissance to Deism—that the really decisive crises occur. That is because it is during this period that the destruction of the religious unity of the Middle Ages is accomplished. This fact is usually ignored, because at that time, in spite of the inner decadence, an astonishingly high level of culture was attained, while the fruits of decomposition did not become apparent in any way until

the second, nor fully until the final phase. It is scarcely admitted that the level of culture characteristic of the first phase is in reality to be attributed to the still consciously effective operation of the mediæval religious dynamism. And yet a link still remaining with the Christian spirit of faith is indubitable. No doubt that link is not the same for the man of the Renaissance and, for example, the Deist. The former, it is true to say, still belongs to the supernatural order of life. The latter has already sunk to the level of purely natural religion. Moreover, the whole of this revolutionary movement is at first restricted to the intelligentsia. The extension of the movement to the masses only follows very slowly, and at a considerably later date. It was not until the nineteenth century that it became an accomplished fact. And even then it actually affected the industrial classes to a far greater degree than the peasantry.

Perhaps the feature that characterises the first phase of the modern spirit, extending from the Renaissance to the development of Deism, is the definitive substitution for the life of faith of a life that finds its end in secular culture as such. Whereas, in the best periods of the Middle Ages and of antiquity, the cultural achievement is, so to speak, the automatic result of a life steeped in the liturgical consecration of religion—natural in antiquity, natural-supernatural in the Middle Ages—at this point the centre of gravity is suddenly and fatally shifted. The cultural

achievement becomes the primary consideration, the sanctity of religious fellowship and the life of faith of secondary importance. Already in antiquity we find this change of gravity in the transition from Æschylus to Euripides. For Æschylus dramatic art was still part of a liturgical life; for Euripides it had already become an end in itself.

This displacement of emphasis in Renaissance man as between religion and culture may be studied in the Camaldolese dialogues of Cristoforo Landino. He describes how, in the year 1468, several members of Lorenzo the Magnificent's Platonic Academy met in the Casentino for philosophical discussion after the manner of the Dialogues of Plato. The Abbot of the monastery was present. The Christian spirit still permeated everything. The members of the party attended the conventual Mass in the morning, and the supernatural still had a place in all their discussions. But in spite of all this a neo-pagan current was perceptible in this intellectual élite. Christian earnestness had yielded to an æsthetic idealism, and thereby the change of orientation characteristic of the age stood revealed.

However the man of the Renaissance may have pictured to himself his increased delight in secular culture as a return to antiquity, he failed to perceive that in reality he took only a connoisseur's interest in the fragrance and bloom of the old civilisation and had little understanding for that fundamental piety from which the fair fruit of

human culture had sprung. This delight in culture as an isolated and self-contained achievement inevitably effected a cleavage within his soul between his Christian belief in the supernatural and a classical culture which he had already, in his conception of it, at any rate, profaned.

We are now in a position to understand why the problem of the creative genius will henceforward be experienced far more intensely than hitherto. This truly modern malady is already apparent in the great spirits of the Renaissance, in Dante, in Petrarch, in Michael Angelo, in Botticelli. It is true that the first victims of this disease of modernity recover after long struggles their place in the religious fellowship. But we already find the tremendously significant symbol of Michael Angelo's "Night" heralding Hamlet and Faust. And the time will soon come when the artist will no longer find his way back to the foot of the Cross when he has laid down his brush. He will no longer find, in the symbolism of his work, atonement and relief for the discord which it has engendered in his spirit, but can only follow the path of tragedy to its end, whether it be despairing suicide or the oblivion of madness.

From the Renaissance onwards the Christian conception of God recedes steadily into the background. The God of Deism is but a pale shadow of the Christian Father-God; the Christian consciousness of sin has almost disappeared, the earnestness of the Christian life has degenerated into the comfortable optimism of the respectable philistine. And this development will go irresistibly for-

ward until the last trace of faith in God, supernatural and natural alike, has melted away like snow before the sun.

The final dilution of the inherited faith of antiquity and Christianity is represented by the fourth type of man, in the second phase of secularisation. It is the humanism of Goethe and his age. Again there is talk of a resuscitation of antiquity. And what is actually attained is but the last remnant of the faith that still survived from that idealism of the reason, itself little better than a ghost, which had characterised the Enlightenment. It is true that at times Goethe's work breathes something of that delicate perfume which marks the Catholicism of the Rhineland. But, when we look more closely into it, we see that it is merely a pleasing play with æsthetic categories; the tremendous, supernatural substance is lost; we are but faintly reminded of the metaphysical depth from which once sprang as a serious reality the life of an entire age.

And now there pass across the stage the first really tragic figures, those who feel obscurely that the æsthetic idealism of Goethe and the ethical idealism of Kant and Fichte are not sufficient to restore a vital content to human life. But the circle of immanence has closed in, and no sortie can any longer pierce the lines; Kleist, Hölderlin and Novalis fall as the first precious victims of the age. The great assault of the Romantics on the bastions of the Enlightenment fails. The positivist and historicist nineteenth century has become inevitable. The tragic shadow of the age of Nietzsche already looms ahead.

II

THE LAST PHASE OF THE DECLINE: MODERN MAN

Now appears before us the fifth type of humanity, the completely uprooted civilised man of the closing nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who, with his ideal of a perfectly uniform and standardised internationalism, is preparing the destruction not only of Christianity but of human culture in general. It is man living a life *in puris naturalibus*, from whom every remnant not only of religion but of metaphysics also has been eliminated, and who, admitting nothing but the abstract law of Things, will recognise the religious convictions of mankind merely as natural phenomena witnessing only to the laws that have produced them.

This human type, the structure of which is so difficult to grasp, has evolved, on the one hand, from the Anglo-French Age of Enlightenment, and, on the other, from the reaction to it that developed during the eighteenth century, that is to say, the æsthetic and ethical idealism of the age of Kant and Goethe. Positivism and historicism are, as it were, the progeny of these two movements, which are inwardly akin through their common deistic origin. The

God of Deism, the mere world-builder, the *architectus mundi*, was the last lingering shadow of the Christian Father-God. As soon, however, as the process of abstraction went a step further, the world was bound to appear as a mere piece of machinery, and this mechanistic conception of the universe was that of positivism. From it there also developed an early type of historicism.

But a second form of historicism developed out of the movement of German idealism, which had resumed contact with antiquity, and, later on, out of Romanticism, which attempted to find a support in the Christian Middle Ages. The latter form of historicism was of course intended to offer a certain degree of opposition to the positivist conception of the world, but actually in the end it was swallowed up by the positivist conception of universal law governing all phenomena, and thus was finally accomplished the complete ousting from history of its sacred element, or, as Berdyaev aptly puts it, "the winding-up of the Renaissance," the complete disruption of that intellectual unity which still survived in the Enlightenment.

The inner affinity between positivism and historicism, which existed from the outset and survived later after a certain amount of conflict, is to be found in the reduction of all phenomena to an abstract law, by which such phenomena are stripped, on the one hand, of their qualities of form and value, and, on the other, of every element of mystery. Everything that strikes us in an object as con-

stituting its form and inner essence is dissolved into relations, and everything that presents itself as a mystery is denied as illusion. Positivism now sets about developing a unique system of metaphysics, based upon the so-called human capacity for illusion. This extraordinary metaphysics of illusion starts off with the attack upon anthropomorphism. It may be true that the Christian Middle Ages had exaggerated at times the part played by anthropomorphism in human knowledge. But in modern times the fact has been overlooked that there is a positive side to anthropomorphism without which the spiritual form of things is bound to remain unrecognisable. In eliminating the subjective sources of error we must on no account lose sight of the fact that the subject, viewed as a spiritually conscious entity, i.e., as πρόσωπον, a person, must not be allowed to disappear completely, since otherwise the form of things is of necessity lost or unrecognisable. The metaphysics of so-called illusion, however, as found in positivism, has for its goal in this direction the complete destruction of the forms whereby being manifests itself. And the most remarkable point about this particular metaphysical system is the circumstance that it actually ascribes positive value to this process of the destruction of forms, inasmuch as it insists that it is only by the rejection of all theological or metaphysical conceptions of the universe that the real, actual, positive universe will become visible, comprehensible and controllable, a reality "freed from

illusions" in every sense, because it is freed from forms and values.

The insistence of science that perception should be as much dehumanised as possible was therefore, properly speaking, an aspiration towards an utterly despiritualised reality, which was to present only an absolutely calculable mechanism. The beginning of this tendency is already typified by Descartes's discovery of analytic geometry. However important in the abstract this discovery may have been for mathematics, it became, so to speak, the prototype of the relativity mania which characterises modern science. Just as in the first case the mathematical forms were reduced to their numerical ratios, so the whole domain of the forms proper to being was to be resolved into similar relative values. It is hardly to be wondered at, then, if gradually space and time became the sole great irreducible factors of existence, the overcoming of which human thought set before itself as its almost exclusive aim.

This effort of positivism to get rid of all so-called illusions contains implicitly the first form of historicism. This is first apparent when the soul, like nature, is stripped of substance and form and regarded as explicable by a soulless relativist psychology. A further step is taken when the endeavour is made to account for the dominant features of culture as mere combinations of mechanical laws. As soon as the combinations are recognised the so-called illusions

are exploded. And the release from illusion, too, depends upon a progressive reduction of everything to mechanical laws.

Sharply opposed to this early type of historicism we find the second type. In opposition to Comte and Taine stands Dilthey, the father of the new tendency, everlastingly repeating his protest in identical terms. This protest is actuated by two distinct motives, the one scientific, the other romantic and sentimental. From the scientific point of view Dilthey opposes the view that psychological phenomena can be explained as combinations of physical laws. He points out that there must exist in the field of psychology a twofold method of knowledge—besides the explanatory method, the comprehension of spiritual significance. In this suggestion of Dilthey's we have the first important protest against the demolition of form characteristic of modern thought. Fundamentally it is an appeal to the spirit, an appeal, moreover, on behalf of that method of comprehension which was the rule in the Middle Ages and in antiquity, but which, since the beginning of modern times, has been increasingly relegated to the background. To understand how important Dilthey's thesis has grown to-day we need only glance at the actual position of psychology, which is passing through a very critical stage, and of those other sciences of the spirit whose former position is menaced from this point of view.

The second motive—the romantic and sentimental—of

Dilthey's protest, and at the same time of the second form of historicism, is to be found in his retrospective romanticism. Destiny had placed Dilthey in a world from which positivism had banished God. But his personality, which needed a religious principle, found itself thus cheated of its highest good. Spiritually too weak of will to make good, by building up a complete system on the basis of his leading idea, the great deficit of his age, which he had correctly divined, he steeped his mournfully retrospective spirit in the past of German idealist faith. It was the last system to offer a certain remnant of belief in values, and from it he steadily followed up the receding footprints of faiths past and gone. By this process he attained one fairly important result at least. He demonstrated that the metaphysics of illusion of Comte and his precursors was fundamentally erroneous. It was Dilthey who recognised that what Comte hailed as progress was a phenomenon of progressive decadence, a destructive manifestation of the steadily growing modern scepticism.

His contemporaries, it is true, saw his position in a different light. They spoke derisively of the discord between Dilthey the scientist and Dilthey the poet. And in this mephistophelian sarcasm at the expense of Dilthey the poet there was conveyed everything that since the development of the positivist metaphysics of illusion had become the common intellectual property of cultured people. In just the same way others had already set about playing off

Plato the poet against Plato the scientist interpreted in terms of Kant, with the idea that in this way they could jettison what they called the poet and retain only the scientist. But the poet in Dilthey had not judged so badly. He had grasped the fact that man cannot live without a belief in values, and that, least of all, is the higher life of the spirit possible without them. And, though he so far yielded to positivism as to term these religious forces "myth" and "illusion," yet he regarded these illusions as a beneficent and fruitful necessity, whereas for the opposition party the welfare of humanity lay in emancipation from these so-called illusions.

Inasmuch then as he looked sentimentally backwards to the earlier ages of faith, Dilthey was a historicist of that second type of which we have spoken; he recognised the necessity of the forces of which faith is the source, but lacked the courage to make the decisive act of faith. He understood what it was that his contemporaries lacked, but he did not live before his time. On the contrary, he endeavoured to explain away both the presence in ages which were spiritually robust of the energy of faith, and its absence in ages which were spiritually stunted, on purely psychological grounds as the inevitable effect of subjective disposition. That is to say, he was a pragmatist of culture, a characteristic product of the period since the Renaissance.

In this way Dilthey's sentimental brand of historicism

dovetailed into the earlier positivist type. Thus the second form of his historicism was not only untenable in itself; it sterilised perceptions which had set him on the right track, so that ultimately he returned to the earlier form. Through weakness and human respect he betrayed the best of himself to the all-pervasive power of positivism. For a determined attack upon the subversive positivist metaphysics of illusion he lacked two indispensable qualities, courage and the childlike simplicity that would not have allowed itself to be led astray by the spurious scientific pride of the age.

Here I must permit myself an observation apparently irrelevant, but without which it will be quite impossible to understand in its true nature the spiritual void, the appalling "profaneness" which characterises the humanity produced by modern civilisation. We have already seen that positivism includes a peculiar metaphysics of illusion, which, strictly speaking, is concerned with two points, the part played by anthropomorphism, here regarded as purely destructive, and the specific "sacredness" inherent in every operation of the human spirit, which does not merely subserve our conservation as living beings, but ministers to man's higher spiritual activities. It is unnecessary here to go more deeply into the positive as opposed to the negative significance of anthropomorphism. But the second point, though actually less frequently considered, plays a very important part in the history of modern speculation. The

entire illusion-metaphysics of modern philosophy since Kant—both the negative as well as the positive or cultural-pragmatic systems—constitutes in its very erroneousness one of the most instructive products of modern thought.

I therefore propose to carry this line of thought a little further. I would draw attention to the fact that in St. Bonaventure the famous doctrine of the *concursus Dei* is far more profound than in later speculation. Admittedly a distinction must be drawn between the natural *concursus Dei generalis* and the supernatural *concursus Dei specialis* of grace. While accepting this distinction in principle, Bonaventure postulates, for all higher non-supernatural spiritual activities, besides the ordinary divine co-operation, a special co-operation, which is not supernatural, it is true, but which, all the same, has a special significance and imparts a peculiarly sacred and mysterious character to these spiritual functions. Later, in part from a fear of making concessions to pantheism, in part from the desire to maintain a firm boundary between nature and supernature, this doctrine, though witnessed by the profoundest experiences of all creative spirits, was almost wholly abandoned. I would emphatically insist that this denial of a special divine assistance initiated the fatal development which has resulted in a profanation not only of man's higher knowledge but of culture generally. This brings us to the question of "scientific impartiality," the tranquil light of reason.

Impartiality, "a tranquil light," these are certainly required, but they must not be confounded with the positivist indifference to values. On the contrary, the true impartiality, the tranquil light of a knowledge untrammelled by unworthy bias, is the highest degree of wisdom, that is to say, the highest degree of the spiritual love of values, the finest and purest conceivable tranquillity and holiness of spirit. The destructive metaphysics of illusion characteristic of modern philosophy has in its gradual development not merely destroyed the positive element of anthropomorphism, to replace it by the deification of the machine, but it has also represented its principle of indifference to values, which ultimately is nothing more than a very shallow philistinism, as wisdom, spiritual tranquillity, and freedom from every kind of so-called illusion. It has attempted the well-nigh sacrilegious identification of its principle of indifference to values with that profoundly significant ethical purification which is the indispensable prerequisite of all higher cultural achievement, and a natural parallel to the supernatural purification of the saint. The ultimate ground for this, however, is that a genuine psychology of the metaphysical substratum as personal no longer exists, but has been replaced by a mechanical psychology of acts. The concepts expressed in the terms "myth" and "illusion," "abstract poetry," and so on, are in themselves witnesses to the disastrous misconceptions entertained by philosophy on this point of such decisive

importance, at any rate since the transcendental dialectic of Kant and the metaphysics of illusion sponsored by positivism and historicism.

Unfortunately I cannot extend this digression any further. Those, however, who would understand the thorough-going intellectual snobbery that characterises the type of man produced by modern civilisation, from the standpoint from which alone it can be understood—his complete lack of any sense of obligation towards holiness or ethical value—should keep this point carefully in mind. The great significance of Goethe's personality, in spite of all his neo-paganism, is entirely due to the fact that he never permitted his intellectual creation to be completely secularised in this respect, but in spite of constant lapses always felt himself obliged to a certain consecration and purification of spirit, to prepare himself to receive the noble and holy gift of his art.

Bound up with the question we have treated so cursorily is the relentless conflict that still rages between what are termed the pure scientists and the poetic scientists. That difficulties exist in this connection I have no wish to deny. But it cannot be over-emphasised that the campaign waged by the modern positivist spirit is and will continue to be directed fundamentally against every type of ἐνθουσιασμός. This is quite natural. For the very concept, as the derivation of the term implies (ἐν τῷ θεῷ εἶναι, "to be in God," is strictly its fundamental meaning), flatly contradicts the

positivist attitude towards the world. There scarcely remains a trace in modern man of that reverence for the higher zone of the human spirit which was felt by the man of antiquity, not to mention mediæval man's reverence for the supernatural. To-day the frigid, value-indifferent philistine holds almost undisputed sway. If, therefore, we are to be frank and to call things by their names, we must acknowledge that things have come to such a pass that to-day the noblest spirits of earlier ages—Plato, Plotinus, Augustine, and so many others—are spurned as out of date, as illusionists, visionaries, romantics, poetic natures, insufficiently cool—that is to say, not indifferent enough, for nowadays only the disillusioned are tolerated. The ages of inspiration and intuition are gone by, and already things have reached the pitch where a philosopher may quite calmly announce that unfortunately he has had no experience of intuitive powers operative in himself.

We have now, however, an inkling at least of what is wanting in Western civilised man. Positivism and historicism between them have nearly everywhere produced an identical human type, which outwardly appears of almost terrifying uniformity, but which inwardly is divided, sentimental, and so possessed by the phobia of illusion that he falls into a blind panic if he perceives anywhere a phenomenon which appears in the least incompatible with his mechanistic and naturalistic categories.

This human type is uniform—astoundingly so, indeed—

but chiefly wherever the modern gospel of disillusionment, or, more truly, of the desecration of being, has been accepted in an almost childish—we cannot say childlike—spirit, as a matter of course. In its extreme form this type was, of course, only to be seen before the outbreak of the great European catastrophe, for afterwards this universal fatality startled more or less even the most humdrum from the pillow of civilisation. And yet it persists to-day, to this extent, at any rate, that many people still imagine themselves at the recommencement of the good old times, if only, they think, tranquillity can once more be restored.

Previously, however, the type was everywhere rampant. It was indeed such a wonderful age, so safely mapped out according to programme, and so remarkably free from problems. Apart from the little social problems in Ibsen's plays, the insignificant difficulties of a Norah produced by the ennui of civilisation, what was there really to worry about, unless one were a misanthropic monster like Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, Strindberg or Dostoievski? Perhaps there were some problems after all—the labour question, for example. But a smoothly-functioning state machine was taking action to prevent this particular question from becoming too acute for the present. And, after all, it was a rather unfair question—something with which people did not care to occupy themselves, because it disturbed their peace and quiet. The gathering storm-clouds of war,

to be sure, constituted another problem, which people discussed at intervals.

But for the most part such discussions were not serious but academic, in the style of the as-if philosophy, because in so guaranteed a period nothing of the kind could possibly happen. Generally speaking, there was no such thing as reality; so people learnt from the works of the neo-Kantian philosophers. There are no such things as stars in the sky, Natorp was then teaching; they exist solely in the heaven of astronomers. And there is no such thing as real history either. In 1914 or 1915 an over-zealous disciple of Rickert declared in all seriousness to those who were trying to puzzle out the meaning of the events which were then maturing that they should wait until at a later time the historians should have spoken. For, he argued, history is not to be sought in the events that occur from day to day; it first originates in the historian's system of categories.

In general reality was law, or, strictly speaking concept, nothing more. The good God—well, He was dead at last. At the most He existed only in theological systems. Since the days of Kant metaphysics had been finally defeated; it was merely the pathological history of defunct metaphysical epochs which repaid study. Man, on the contrary, it had now been scientifically demonstrated, was merely the last link of a long chain of animal evolution.

This human type was made uniform by its official prog-

ress through education-factories, which were the same everywhere. At the most people were distinguished—and the distinction was certainly important—by the number of years spent in their education or by the number of books that they had read. They were everywhere uniform, with a uniform emptiness and philistine superficiality. For it was easy to find an explanation for everything, when one had acquired the expert's glance, which could always be obtained, moreover, for a consideration. And all puzzles were solved, except a few minor details such as, for instance, the phenomenon of life, which, however, it was hoped would shortly be produced in a test-tube. In fact, in earlier days people would never have believed it possible that so much could have been achieved by following the positivist prescription.

Above all, the days of the great historical cataclysms already lay far behind. One had to go all the way back to Napoleon if one wanted, from the depths of a capacious armchair, to experience the agreeable and æsthetic sensation of a genuine historical thrill. The frontier posts of the European countries were so firmly wedged in the ground. Beyond doubt, they were planted there for eternity. Yes, everything was stable, amazingly stable, and as for historical movement—well, there was a certain amount going on, of course, but that was in the far distance, in the Balkans—among races that had not as yet tasted sufficiently the blessings of European civilisation.

I know that in all this I shall be accused of exaggeration. For only a very few men have really suffered from the spirit of this period; the majority felt themselves at ease in this superficial uniformity. And the impression left by the sketch I have given will only be heightened by the necessary inclusion in the picture of the fact that almost everyone was unconscious of the mental atmosphere he breathed. However, to meet the charge of exaggeration I will recall two utterances of prominent men of the day, which belong to the time shortly preceding the catastrophe.

On December 31st, 1913, the eminent Berlin lawyer, Joseph Kohler, wrote the preface to a book that bore the title *Recht und Persönlichkeit*. At the end of this preface he triumphantly spoke of the victory won by the modern mind. With particular pride he pointed out that war, like private revenge, had been, so to speak, left behind, thanks to the great strides made by modern reason, which, as Comte had already said, must finally succeed in abolishing all irrational outbursts of violence. The fury of war, in Kohler's opinion, had been banished to the Far East, where it was lingering out its last days. Perhaps the Berlin savant wrote those proud words on the last night of the year, oblivious of the fact that with the stroke of twelve at his back the hands of the great clock of world history had swung forward to the fateful year 1914.

That is all very well, you may object, but Joseph Kohler was something of a visionary, with a head full of other

things besides jurisprudence. Very well, then. Let me remind you of the words of an eminent statesman, who at that time held in his hands, to a certain extent, the fate of the world. It is impossible to suggest that his mind was feverish or eccentric. That man was Sir Edward Grey. Have we already forgotten the words spoken by this sober calculator when, at the moment of the declaration of war, he sought to reassure the German ambassador by remarking that of course England would call a halt when she considered that the time was ripe.¹ Were not such words more or less equivalent to Joseph Kohler's? Were they not amazingly typical of the positivist spirit that characterised the civilised man of this period, who had lost all understanding for the ever-impenetrable irrationality of world history?

Hitherto we have spoken only of the external uniformity of this civilisation and of the human type it produced. It is time to consider them from within. Here we discover, in spite of the uniform surface, a really terrible lack of direction and of communication between man and man, between soul and soul. There was but one bond of union: science, which explained, and explained away, everything. Inwardly man was as free as a bird in the air. Not only was religion solely the affair of the individual, but each and every kind of conception of the universe was equally his private choice, varying from day to day, often even

¹ Lichnowsky: *My Mission to London*, 1912-1914.

from hour to hour. And these conceptions of the universe, countless in their number and variety, were marketable like any other commodity. They were very seldom deeply rooted in the soil. Some there were, even, which were put on for important functions, like an order or dress coat. At such times people intoxicated themselves with the perfume of their eloquence, just as if they believed what they said, only to lay their views aside again the next morning, when they had fulfilled their purpose. An amazing riot of conflicting views was the order of the day. Woe to the young man who at this period entered the anarchy of the intellectual world. He must have fancied that he was starting on a long sea voyage, so tossed about was he from one conception of the universe to another.

Shortly before his death, Dilthey, in complete despair, uttered his memorable remark on "the anarchy of values" in which we were obliged to live. But this anarchy of values was only revealed when the storm at last broke. Men, both great and small, stood like frightened children on the shore of time, while the fearful hurricane raged itself out and the waves swelled mountain-high. For the first time men could clearly measure the bankruptcy to which the positivist spirit had led mankind. The confusion now reached its climax. The division was revealed between man and man, indeed, in every human heart. A few retained their old pride in science and took refuge in the naturalistic wisdom of the stoic. Everything is fate, they

said, and the only thing to do is to submit and keep a stiff upper lip. Others recognised the want from which humanity was suffering; and they took refuge in a realm of form. But they only prized the form for the sake of its pragmatical value. They took no account of its content, or, rather, they lacked the genuineness, the energy, the courage and the childlike quality which were necessary before they could accept the content. Others, again, looked round regretfully for old discarded forms and collected them with an extraordinary devotion and love. I need only recall Anatole France and his museum of religions at the Villa Saïd. And then there were those who did not merely turn reflectively towards these various views of the universe, but put them into practice, one after the other. They staggered to and fro between Buddha and Christ, between Lao-tsze and Francis, unable to find foothold or rest. But at the end of all this was the dreadful howling of the wolf. The spirit dwelling within the human animal shrieked aloud its testimony to the fact that man is not merely the final link of an animal evolution but the beginning of a wholly new kingdom, the Rubicon behind which there is no return.

Since Hegel, however, the philosophy of immanence had completed its circumvallation wall of fatalism, and it was in vain that the human spirit attempted to break through it. The philosophic interpreters of the contemporary outlook now taught, to be sure, that we must take account of human personality. But when they came to the point

where the circle of immanence should be pierced, and the way to the transcendental laid open, they shrank back afraid. It is in the earthen vessel alone that we find the heavenly treasure in its entirety, was the prudent opinion of one of them. There is something satanic in existence, declared another; but—so he immediately modified his pronouncement—we must not, like the Christian mythology, take it seriously as a reality. We could go on piling up example upon example to prove this phenomenon of despair, this advance to the edge of the supernatural, and terror-stricken recoil. Men could not well go beyond Hegel, for that would have meant throwing themselves into the arms of Christianity. A tragic spectacle indeed, this humanity outside the Church, this man of the early twentieth century who has been so completely uprooted. Again and again we are forcibly reminded, as we contemplate him, of the great Danish writer Kierkegaard, who already, by the middle of the nineteenth century, had so profoundly analysed this malady of despair in all its metaphysical symptoms, in all its disquieting forms and phases.

Are men mature enough to-day to understand his message at last? A few perhaps. A reaction has certainly set in. But the great masses? We can hardly doubt that they must still pass through a very long development before they can measure the extent of that tremendous annihilation of values which has taken place, step by step, during the last three or four centuries. At whose door does

the blame for this annihilation of values lie? What really is its ultimate and profoundest significance? The answer to this question is shown clearly enough by the foregoing analysis of modern intellectual history. But I will shortly restate with the aid of a picture what is the only possible reply.

I have often sat meditating before an Italian bookmarker, which I discovered between the leaves of a Dante. On this bookmarker there is a very original little picture. In the midst of a flowery spring landscape stands a tall cross. Christ hangs upon it, His downward glance movingly expressive of the anguish He suffers. At the foot of the cross sits a man wearing a cowl, his face supported in his hands, and softly sobbing to himself. He is Francis. Everywhere around him and around the cross there is loneliness—dreadful, terrible loneliness—for all men have fled, and he alone has remained. Beneath the picture are the words, *L'amore che non è amato*, "Love that is not loved". Further comment is unnecessary. *L'amore che non è amato*.

III

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

OUR reflections hitherto have directed our glance backwards to the widespread ruin left by the Western Enlightenment. But we are now faced with a serious question. What can we do, we whom Providence has placed in this situation, if we intend not to allow ourselves to drift passively down the stream of events, but rather to check this progressive decadence?

To answer this question seriously we must first of all clear up some preliminary questions which appear to be blocking the way to a solution of this fundamental problem of the age.

The first of these preliminary questions is this: is it still possible in principle to arrest a destiny so overwhelmingly powerful because it is the result of an accumulation of energy which has proceeded unchecked for three or four centuries? This is no idle question. The pessimism in both life and culture that has existed ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century is sufficient proof how far Western man has lost his old belief in the power of the mind and free will, which still dominated the eighteenth

century, with its boundless confidence in reason. Contemporary fatalism, as manifested, for example, in the historical philosophy of Oswald Spengler, has proclaimed to the entire world that man must be regarded as simply the passive channel through which flows a stream of cosmic process wholly determined by natural law, which leaves no room for personal action.

If, in reaction against this conception, a handful of idealists take refuge in an equally one-sided method and attempt to hide with a few cheap idealistic declarations the tremendous burden of fatality which at present presses so hard upon us, this rash idealism is just as blind as the blind fatalism it combats. We have but to consider the difficult problems involved by the modern economic system, indeed by the entire machinery of that civilisation which we serve, to realise that this potent destiny which we ourselves have prepared cannot be averted by an airy wave of the hand. Even the man who withdraws from the contemporary world into a lonely Thebaid soon discovers that the tentacles of civilisation reach him even there, for the monasteries of to-day make use of the comforts of modern civilisation, however determined their rejection of the spirit which that civilisation represents.

Or consider the Machiavellian principle of autonomy accepted as the political principle of the modern state. How could a Christian statesman to-day absolutely reject this political bestiality, and build up his state entirely on

the foundation of the Christian ideal of love? Obviously he could not, for by such an attempt either he would gravely imperil the existence of his country, or his own career as a statesman would speedily be cut short by an all-powerful public opinion.

We are therefore compelled to recognise both alike; the objective burden of destiny, on the one hand, and, on the other, the power of ideas, freedom and personal action. But we must not ignore the constantly shifting relation in which, historically, these two factors of liberty and fate stand to one another. The opinion of Hegel, for instance, that history consists of a bee-line progress towards freedom, must be emphatically rejected. There is no constancy whatever in the relationship between these two historical forces, liberty and fate. On the contrary, the latter force, fate, is always developing by its own momentum until the opposing force, freedom, seems reduced to the minimum of a mere potentiality. The marvel is that this mere potentiality of freedom though faced by a fatality grown so excessively powerful is sufficient to enable the human will to rise superior to fate, and, at times, with such catastrophic force that in one night, so to speak, it uproots the jungle of poisonous growths fostered for an entire age by a destiny whose sway had known no check. This occurs whenever personalities inspired by a fervent belief in their mission intervene at the right moment in the causally determined course of events. The example of a man like St.

Francis in the thirteenth century should prove to us how erroneous is the doctrine, recently advanced by Max Scheler, that ideal factors are impotent in face of real factors; that is, we regard the former not, like Hegel, as ideas acting impersonally, but in that concrete form in which alone ideas normally take shape, namely personalities, inspired by a powerful faith, which have always been, through the world's history, the agents of the Eternal.

We have only to look about us to find contemporary examples of the spiritual energy which at times a single man can infuse into his age. In Italy, for instance, Mussolini appeared, and Italy followed him. In Russia Lenin, and Russia abandoned the lethargy of Oriental mysticism and took his path. I am certainly not suggesting that in future the world must travel along one or other of these two routes. These two figures, both of daimonic power, are simply examples of what man's personal will can accomplish when face to face with a destiny apparently overwhelming. They further prove that in principle nothing prevents humanity from returning to the Christian road, if hereafter personalities arise who will make the Christian spirit an effective factor in world history with that enthusiasm which alone has from the beginning accomplished the miracle of freeing man from the burden of his animal nature and leading him upwards to that hallowed summit which rises above space and time.

It cannot, of course, be denied that at the present day a

peculiar difficulty stands in the way of such a possibility. We have already seen in our preceding enquiry how profoundly the piety innate in human nature has been destroyed since the power of Christian faith was defeated. We must therefore ask whose mission it shall be to become, amidst the indifference of Western humanity, the leaven of a new energy of faith, the salt of the earth. The mission of Christians generally? That is impossible, for the Protestant Christian of to-day has been, to all intents and purposes, robbed by a liberal sciolism of his full belief in Christ. Movements of regeneration within Protestantism, such as that led by Karl Barth and Friedrich Gogarten, only confirm this terrible fact. Fundamentally, therefore, in the midst of the universal intellectual and religious chaos, only the Catholic remains to undertake so responsible and sublime an apostolate in the Western world of our day. And when we remember that the forces of destruction broke in fullest fury upon the centre of Europe, the region of Teutonic culture, we may say that the brunt of responsibility rests on the shoulders of German Catholicism, on that section of the Catholic people which lives in the heart of Europe, and which, ever since Luther and the Council of Trent, has had to put up one single unbroken struggle to preserve its Christianity and Catholicism.

This fact, however, complicates the whole situation still further. For this mission of a Christian apostolate to the

Western world falls precisely on those Catholics who in the course of the long struggle for their spiritual and intellectual existence have themselves lost something of the original spontaneity of their faith and Christian life. It is true, no doubt, that among the peasant masses between Cologne, Munich and Vienna faith is still everywhere genuine, strong and practical. But among the urban proletariat the situation is entirely different; for the worker in the towns, because he is more intimately bound up with the machine of Western civilisation, is strongly attracted by the current of international indifferentism. The position of the Catholic intelligentsia is more difficult still, though it is they precisely who should take a very special part in this great Christian mission. The clergy are hardly capable by themselves of undertaking and carrying out successfully such an apostolate. For the clergy—chiefly concerned, amid the universal movement of secularisation, to maintain intact the purity of the faith—have on this account been obliged to a certain extent to let the modern world go by, and can no longer even understand its language. The educated Catholic laity, however, is for the most part either itself infected in some degree with the poison of modern religious indifference, or else, where this is not the case, usually lacks at least that theological equipment without which it is practically impossible to engage with any hope of success in the mighty intellectual struggle of to-day.

It will, however, be better perhaps to leave all such considerations on one side, and calmly ask ourselves another question. What actually can happen? This question has nothing to do with empty prophecies, such as are in vogue nowadays. We would simply consider a few eventualities of future development, and perhaps in the prospect of these we shall find the answer to our main question, what are we to do?

Now, first of all, it would be possible to allow things to go quietly forward in the direction they have taken for the last three or four centuries, the steady downward trend of intellectual and spiritual secularisation to proceed unchecked. We should then look calmly on while the positivist spirit of the age reinforced still deeper its dogma of the mere immanence of being and propagated it steadily among the great masses of the people. The inevitable consequences of such a nihilistic apostolate are scarcely doubtful. The example of Moscow should have proved to the most blind indifferentist that where the purely fatalistic principle of *laissez-faire* is given full rein events will work out their inevitable logic and produce the fall of Western civilisation. For when man loses faith in the power of positive ideas, things begin to dictate to him the law of their intrinsic development, and—amazingly enough—always find nihilistic personalities to carry out their work of destruction when constructive personalities are wanting.

We might, indeed, ask what it matters, after all, if

Western culture is destroyed. It would not be the end of the world. World history would merely assume a fresh aspect, by the shifting of its centre of gravity from Europe to some other continent. And the Catholic could go further, and add that even if Western culture were destroyed, the Christian work of salvation and its natural-supernatural institution, the Church, would survive the ruin intact.

No Catholic worthy of the name would attempt to deny this last contention. For him, the Church of God—*portæ inferi non praevalébunt contra eam*—stands fast as a rock amidst the ebb and flow of temporal movements. And yet we, too, we men of the Christian West, are called upon to assist, by our action and our sacrifice, in assuring the stability of the Christian sanctuary in a non-Christian world. This indeed belongs to the supernatural aspect of our Western history. But from the natural standpoint also we are faced by a demand no less grave. For “man must make history,” as Willy Helpach aptly put it; that is, it is not permitted to any man or race to renounce the will to heroic action, so long as even a spark of life remains in that man or people.

It is, of course, possible to visualise another possible development. History is, after all, not only the work of the human will. It represents a certain co-operation between the human and divine wills, a mysterious interplay between the providence of God and the intentions and deeds of men. We might therefore ask whether God’s providence

may not some day intervene directly to effect a decisive turn in this downward process? God could indeed raise up among us great saints, men and women, who would set an example to their age of supernatural life actually lived, and, at the same time, by their personal sacrifice, mystically effect, as it were, a vicarious redemption from the tremendous load of universal guilt, whose weight prevents our contemporaries from ascending to a higher level of spiritual existence.

Has not this perhaps actually happened in France? Was not the spiritual life of nineteenth-century France penetrated in its entirety by the silent, one might almost say anonymous, sanctifying work of quite simple people, who offered themselves to God in order to make atonement, not for themselves alone, but for their country and their age? And were not these souls genuine springs of spiritual power which, as time went on, watered the land which Voltaire and his fellows had laid waste? Already we can estimate how much the revival of the Christian spirit among the Catholic intelligentsia in France owes to the holy life and work of such a man as the saintly Curé d'Ars. Do we not meet everywhere with the profound traces of his activity? Those who have read Huysman's *Cathédrale* or *En route*, or Bernanos' *Sous le Soleil de Satan*—I have no intention whatever of excusing or concealing the jansenistic blemishes of this latter work—will understand the extent of France's debt to this single man. And they will

also understand what it means. It means that for humanity there is not only a degrading solidarity of fate and guilt, but a solidarity of goodness also, and that whenever a human being in silent self-dedication devotes his life wholly to God, the general level of personal conduct around him immediately begins to rise, whether or no we are conscious of the effect.

Why then, we may ask, should not God raise up among ourselves also some great figure, like, for instance, St. Francis or St. Dominic, who through the miracle and grace of his character would bring about at one blow the great reaction, which the weakness of our hands and the poverty of our souls makes it impossible to effect by the natural way of isolated actions. It would surely be a mistake if we men of little faith denied the possibility of such an amazing intervention of Providence. But it would be equally mistaken to sit still and placidly await such a miracle of grace in order thereby to get rid of all personal responsibility. That would be as disastrous a fatalism as that described above. It is true, *spiritus ubi vult spirat*; we can never force the Spirit's miracle of grace; we must hope for it, wait for it, beg for it. But we must never make such a hope the pretext for sinking into a mystic lethargy, for shirking personal effort. We ourselves must begin to take action, and only then may we justly expect that God will act with us. We must ourselves try to prepare for the new outpouring of the Spirit.

This brings us back to our question, so pregnant with responsibility: what are we to do? Immediately we are faced with a fresh difficulty. It is that great alternative which faces us in the first place as Catholics. This alternative arises out of the intrinsic opposition between nature and supernature. Catholics of every age have had to wrestle with it. To-day, however, an unambiguous decision on this twofold relationship, a clear and resolute choice between these factors, seems more urgently required of us than ever before. We have already seen clearly enough the extent to which the world of to-day is "disenchanted," to speak the language of Max Weber, that is of the modern mind itself; "atheised, de-Christianised" in the Catholic terminology. The originally fictitious *status naturæ puræ* to-day no longer seems a fiction; it seems to have become very real. Subjectively indeed—that is so far as the attitude of modern man is concerned—it has actually become a reality, among wide masses of the people. In consequence so wide a gulf has opened between the natural and the supernatural order that it might seem impossible to bridge it. Is it then to be wondered at, if one party in the Catholic camp urges a policy of wholesale retreat to the *status fidei*, kept uncontaminated from all modern culture, though the desecrated world be thus left to take its own way to destruction? The Catholic's primary duty, they urge, is to secure his personal salvation and the purity of his faith; everything beyond this is the concern of Provi-

dence, and that self-regulating development of modern culture which has now lost the faith for good and all.

Obviously such a counsel of despair could not pass uncontested, and inevitably it has given rise to an acrimonious dispute within the Catholic camp itself, on the line of action to be adopted in this critical juncture. Those opposed to the policy of wholesale withdrawal plead for a courageous apostolate to the modern world, they advocate a firm advance from a position which might justly be termed a form—if only partial—of Catholic Stoicism. And, however seriously the demand for the preservation of faith at any price must be taken, from another point of view it represents a surrender to the power and fatality of our desecrated modern culture, and the extremist policy of retreat *intra muros* manifestly involves a stoic despair.

But a further question arises out of this controversy within the Catholic camp. Will not our disputes about the line of action to adopt result in bringing all action to a standstill, and ultimately in making it impossible? In actual fact, has not this controversy gradually weakened the initial vigour of German Catholicism, until to-day it is in danger of being entirely paralysed? And, meanwhile, has not this internecine conflict between Catholics so poisoned the atmosphere that not only are those who stand without beginning to turn away again disappointed, but among Catholics themselves a disquietening uncertainty is

becoming noticeable, an uncertainty that, unfortunately, has already produced many distressing consequences?

Of what use, however, would it be to settle this great question of the relation between nature and supernature, between culture and Christianity, theoretically, unless we also grappled with the practical demands of the times? At a crisis like this the most urgent necessity is to act. It is no time for theorising, still less for theorising over a problem that is one of the most difficult that theology has to consider, which in practice must be settled differently for every case, situation and individual. But here we are back at the question: What we are to do? What are we, each in his place, to do at a crisis which must decide the fate of an entire epoch?

In treating this serious question of conscience we must no doubt recognise the truth contained in the "catacomb" policy. Every important modification of the general ethos must proceed from the profoundest depth of personalities whose interior life endures unperturbed however the tides of contemporary opinion ebb and flow around them. Modern morality has entirely forgotten that the wellspring of all ethical change must be sought in the interior depths of the soul, and that, therefore, the root of every ethic is embedded in a radical stability of disposition, in the ground once more become unconscious of the acts which manifest a moral and moralised nature.

Operari sequitur esse; action follows being: this maxim

also holds good for the being that has been and is constantly being produced by our action. Thus the first duty of the Catholic of to-day is to comply as strictly as possible with the demand of the secessionists so far as the preparation of his own soul is concerned. He must not at first presume to think of anything but of strengthening from day to day the life of faith in himself, as the early Christians did amid the decadence of antiquity. And the more cheerfully and earnestly he works at this primary task of personal preparation, the more sure will be his success. This, however, entails much more than would appear at first glance. For it means that we must eradicate in ourselves the critical, indeed hypercritical, spirit with which even Catholics, as partakers of the modern mind, are filled. It means that once and for all we must avert our gaze from the temporal aspect of the Church, which, like a creeper, covers with its rank growth the eternal, and in the tendrils of which we are in daily danger of becoming entangled. As Catholics, we must try to recapture the quality of reverence, reverence for what is eternal in the Church. The criticism we must then employ upon the temporal accretions that surround the eternal nucleus will then become of itself different from what it has been of late years in certain quarters. Even if in individual cases we find much to displease us, we must accept with complete trust the general line of development that runs through the Christian tradition of the centuries. Such a confident and

positive attitude, however, is possible only if with child-like joy we identify ourselves with the unity of faith. If we will do this, all the obstacles arising out of modern social distinctions will automatically vanish. The man who kneels in church before the gracious image of the Mother of God is not divided by his intellectual culture, be he statesman, artist or thinker, from the intellectually less cultivated man who kneels beside him, for he shares with him the same supernatural atmosphere. Indeed, he feels at once that the mere presence beside him of the relatively less cultivated man passes over to him something of his being, so that a union is effected between them, in the very substance of the soul, which no method of intellectual cultivation that modern pedagogics could devise, however ingenious, could produce.

Moreover—and here also the uncompromising secessionists are in the right—this personal preparation involves of itself a certain apostolate. It is always the being of a personality, which has the greatest power to attract his environment, if the latter is inwardly weaker. Moreover, it is the being of a particular quality (*ad hoc*) that chiefly performs this miracle of attraction; the serious, genuine being, which is no mere show, but lives in the centre of the self—is objective, childlike, happy and trustful, fed by the central energy of faith itself.

But how absurd it would be if in sight of a personality that has thus moulded not isolated deeds but its very self,

we continued to torment ourselves with the question whether we ought to undertake the official task of evangelising modern culture or not? The problem is already in a fair way to solution the moment we set our hand to the plough and seriously undertake our own moral and religious purification. Inevitably the effects of our new interior life and personal disposition will reveal themselves in our action upon our environment. The alternative, Christianity or culture, now loses its meaning. Every view of the universe immediately generates its specific cultural energy. Why, then, should Christianity—which, after all, is no mere view of the universe arbitrarily adopted, but the junction of man's nature and supernature with an objective, natural and supernatural truth—be unable to effect what is within the power even of purely subjective conceptions of the world?

To be sure the faith of the Catholic can never be pragmatic. From him above all is demanded a being genuine through and through. He must never content himself with the flower when the root and stem are of supreme importance. Yet if he complies with this primary demand, inevitably, given certain conditions, his tree of life will begin to bear its buds and flowers, for such is the nature of every living plant. There can be no doubt that Fra Angelico had in the first place to become Fra Angelico the saintly friar, and that with all the ardour of his Christian and childlike spirit. But it is equally unquestionable that once this con-

dition had been fulfilled, or rather while it was being fulfilled more and more every day, the artist within him was putting forth—and could not do otherwise—the splendid blossoms of his art.

Why should not that which was possible centuries ago be possible again to-day? The intrinsic laws of history and of the human soul are the same at all times and in all places. We may indeed ask ourselves how long it will be before that great process of secularisation is reversed whose final phase we are now witnessing. But a question like this is, after all, thoroughly un-Christian, born of an impatient anxiety over this world. Christian faith does not live by sight, but by belief in the Invisible. And, therefore, it always involves Christian patience, that is to say, the long deep breath of Eternity. But it is actually possible to answer the question here and now. This process of regeneration will be accomplished in the very hour when we Catholics unite in the serious reform of ourselves. When we have one and all effected this self-reformation, each in his own place, at once, inevitably and simultaneously, a force of attraction, natural and supernatural, will be generated so potent that none of those standing without will be able finally to resist it. No doubt the difficulties involved by the opposition between Christianity and a de-Christianised culture will not be disposed of at one blow. But they will begin to disappear, and a new age will dawn.

Yes, what are we to do? What am I to do, and what are

you to do? It is, of course, impossible to answer the question in detail. But a general answer is easy. It will be this: *crede et fac quod vis; ama et fac quod vis; ora et fac quod vis*. Believe and do what you will; love and do what you will; pray and do what you will. And that in turn means—get on in every respect with your own work. Make *yourself* Christian: completely Christian. Then look around you, and perform the work that has been given you, according to your capacity. But wait in patience. For it is only the sowing that is your business. Leave, with childlike trust, the gathering of the harvest to the generations that God has called to that magnificent task.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEW AGE

By CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

I

HUMANISM AND THE NEW ORDER ¹

FOR centuries a civilisation will follow the same path, worshipping the same gods, cherishing the same ideals, acknowledging the same moral and intellectual standards. And then all at once a change will come, the springs of the old life run dry, and men suddenly awake to a new world, in which the ruling principles of the former age seem to lose their validity and to become inapplicable or meaningless.

This is what occurred in the time of the Roman Empire, when the ancient world, which had lived for centuries on the inherited capital of the Hellenistic culture, seemed suddenly to come to the end of its resources and to realise its need of something entirely new. For four hundred years the civilised world had been reading the same books, admiring the same works of art, and cultivating the same types of social and personal expression. Then came the change of the third and fourth centuries, A.D., when the

¹ The author desires to express his thanks to the editors and publishers of the *Criterion* and the *Dublin Review* for their kindness in allowing him to reprint, in the first two chapters of this essay, portions of articles which originally appeared in the pages of those reviews.

forms of the Hellenistic culture suddenly lost their vitality and men turned to a new art, a new thought and a new way of life—from philosophy to theology, from the Greek statue to the Byzantine mosaic, from the gymnasium to the monastery.

This species of cultural discontinuity is not unknown in other civilisations—for example in China in the third and fourth centuries A.D.—but it seems specially characteristic of the West. It took place once more in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries at the close of the Middle Ages, and we seem to be experiencing something of the kind in Europe to-day. During the last period of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century a further phase of Western civilisation came to an end. The old capital was exhausted and there was nothing to take its place. Liberalism and Nationalism had won their long fight with the old order, but they had lost their own ideals. In Italy the Risorgimento had given place to the age of Crispi and the Triple Alliance, and in France the centenary of the Republic was being celebrated by the Panama scandals. It was a dark age—dark not as in the early Middle Ages with the honest night of barbarism, but with the close uneasy gloom that comes before a storm. In the past, the periods of climax, as a rule, have been ages of material distress and economic decline, but the terrifying thing about that age was its prosperity, its confidence, its material success. “There has never,” wrote Péguy, “been an

age in which money was to such a degree the only master and god. And never have the rich been so protected against the poor and the poor so unprotected against the rich. . . .

"And never has the temporal been so protected against the spiritual; and never has the spiritual been so unprotected against the temporal." ¹

The goal of the Liberal Enlightenment and Revolution had been reached, and Europe at last possessed a completely secularised culture. The old religion had not been destroyed; in fact throughout Protestant Europe the churches still possessed a position of established privilege. But they held this position only on the condition that they did not interfere with the reign of Mammon. In reality they had been pushed aside into a backwater where they were free to stagnate in peace and to brood over the memory of dead controversies which had moved the mind of Europe three centuries before.

On the other hand the intellectuals who had contributed so much to the victory of the new order of things were in a somewhat similar plight. They found themselves powerless to influence the movement of civilisation, which had cut itself free, not only from tradition, but also from art and thought. The spiritual leadership that was possessed by Voltaire and Rousseau, by Goethe and Fichte, was now a thing of the past. The men of letters were expected to

¹ C. Péguy, *L'argent Suite*, pp. 170-171.

follow society, not to lead it. And this is what many of them did, whether with the professional servility of the journalist or with the disinterested fanaticism of the realist, who affirmed his artistic integrity by the creation of an imaginary world no less devoid of spiritual significance than was the social world in which he lived. But a large number, probably the majority, found neither of these alternatives satisfactory. They turned to literature and art as a means of escape from reality. That was the meaning to many of the catchword, "Art for Art's sake."¹ Symbolism and æstheticism, the Ivory Tower and the Celtic Twilight, Satanism and the cult of "Evil," hashish and absinthe; all of them were ways by which the last survivors of Romanticism made their escape, leaving the enemy in possession of the field.

There was, however, one exception, one man who refused to surrender.

Whatever his weakness Friedrich Nietzsche was neither a time-server nor a coward. He at least stood for the supremacy of spirit, when so many of those whose office it was to defend it had fallen asleep or had gone over to the enemy. He remained faithful to the old ideals of the Renaissance culture, the ideals of creative genius and of the self-affirmation of the free personality, and he revolted against the blasphemies of an age which degraded the per-

¹ Its true meaning, however, is to be found rather in the dillettantism of Oscar Wilde.

sonality and denied the power of the spirit in the name of humanity and liberty.

Nevertheless, Nietzsche himself was far from being a humanist. Humanism is essentially a *via media*, and in the nineteenth century the *via media* had become identical with mediocrity. In Nietzsche's eyes humanity had become something either ridiculous or shameful, and the attempt to pass beyond humanity led him to the negation of humanism and the destruction of his own personality; as he said, the way of the creator is to burn himself in his own fire. Yet the tragedy of Nietzsche is the tragedy of the end of humanism, since it only reveals with exceptional clearness the ultimate consequences of the antinomy that was inherent in the humanist tradition from the beginning.

The essentially transitory character of the humanist culture has been obscured by the dominance of the belief in Progress and by the shallow and dogmatic optimism which characterised nineteenth-century Liberalism. It was only an exceptionally original mind, like that of the late T. E. Hulme, that could free itself from the influence of Liberal dogma and could recognise *the signs of the times*—the passing of the ideals that had dominated European civilisation for four centuries, and the dawn of a new order.

In the years that followed the war this consciousness has become general, at least on the Continent, owing largely to the popularity of Spengler's well-known book, *The Decline of the West*. But Spengler's arbitrary and sub-

jective theorising threw no light upon the inner meaning of the change. A much more profound analysis of the modern situation is to be found in the works of the modern Russian thinkers of the school of Solovyov, above all Nicholas Berdyaev. In his book *Der Sinn der Geschichte* and in his later essays on "The New Middle Ages," Berdyaev has dealt with the passing of humanism not as an instance of historical fatality, but in its ultimate significance for the spiritual life of humanity, and has shown how the disintegration of the Renaissance culture was the result of a spiritual disunity and conflict which it was never able to overcome.

In spite of its ideal of a purely human perfection and its cult of classical form, there was in humanism something excessive, a kind of *hubris* which led it to destruction. We see this already in the brilliant culture of fifteenth-century Italy, where the unbridled individualism of princes and cities led to the loss of national independence. But that is only a superficial instance of the instability of the new order. It is not in any obvious material failure, but in its very triumphs and successes, that the real weakness of the movement is to be found. For each fresh victory of the humanistic spirit undermined the foundations of its own vitality.

The Renaissance has its beginning in the self-discovery, the self-realization and the self-exaltation of Man. Mediæval man has attempted to base his life on the super-

natural. His ideal of knowledge was not the adventurous quest of the human mind exploring its own kingdom; it was an intuition of the eternal verities which is itself an emanation from the Divine Intellect—*irradiatio et participatio primæ lucis*. The men of the Renaissance, on the other hand, turned away from the eternal and the absolute to the world of nature and human experience. They rejected their dependence on the supernatural, and vindicated their independence and supremacy in the temporal order. But thereby they were gradually led by an internal process of logic to criticise the principles of their own knowledge and to lose confidence in their own freedom. The self-affirmation of man gradually led to the denial of the spiritual foundations of his freedom and knowledge. This tendency shows itself in every department of modern thought. In philosophy, it leads from the dogmatic rationalism of Descartes and the dogmatic empiricism of Locke to the radical scepticism of Hume and the subjectivism of later German thought. Reason is gradually stripped of its prerogatives until nothing is left to it but the bare "as if" of Vaihinger.

In science, the growth of man's knowledge and his control over nature is accompanied by a growing sense of man's dependence on material forces. He gradually loses his position of exception and superiority and sinks back into nature. He becomes a subordinate part of the great mechanical system that his scientific genius has created.

In the same way, the economic process, which led to the exploitation of the world by man and the vast increase of his material resources, ends in the subjection of man to the rule of the machine and the mechanisation of human life. Finally, in the political and social sphere, the revolt against the mediæval principle of hierarchy and the reassertion of the rights of the secular power led to the absolutism of the modern national state. This again was followed by a second revolt—the assertion of the rights of man against secular authority which culminated in the French Revolution. But this second revolt also led to disillusion. It led, on the one hand, to the disintegration of the organic principle in society into an individualistic atomism, which leaves the individual isolated and helpless before the new economic forces, and, on the other, to the growth of the new bureaucratic state, that “coldest of cold monsters,” which exerts a more irresistible and far-reaching control over the individual life than was ever possessed by the absolute monarchies of the old régime.

So we have the paradox that at the beginning of the Renaissance, when the conquest of nature and the creation of modern science are still unrealised, man appears in god-like freedom with a sense of unbounded power and greatness; while at the end of the nineteenth century, when nature has been conquered and there seem no limits to the powers of science, man is once more conscious of his misery and weakness as the slave of material circumstance

and physical appetite and death. Instead of the heroic exaltation of humanity which was characteristic of the naturalism of the Renaissance, we see the humiliation of humanity in the anti-human naturalism of Zola. Man is stripped of his glory and freedom and left as a naked human animal shivering in an inhuman universe.

Thus humanism by its own inner development is eventually brought to deny itself and to pass away into its opposite. For Nietzsche, who refused to surrender the spiritual element in the Renaissance tradition, humanism is transcended in an effort to attain to the superhuman without abandoning the self-assertion and the rebellious freedom of the individual will—an attempt which inevitably ends in self-destruction. But modern civilisation as a whole could not follow this path. It naturally chose to live as best it could, rather than to commit a spectacular suicide. And so, in order to adapt itself to the new conditions, it was forced to throw over the humanist tradition.

Hence the increasing acceptance of the mechanisation of life that has characterised the last thirty years. Above all, in the period since the war there has been a growing tendency towards the de-intellectualisation and exteriorisation of European life. The old fixed canons of social and moral conduct have been abandoned, and society has given itself up to the current of external change without any attempt towards self-direction or the preservation of spiritual continuity. But this acceptance of new conditions is in itself

negative, and possesses no creative quality. It points to the dying-down and stagnation of culture rather than its renewal. Nor is this surprising. For centuries, Western civilisation has received its impetus from the humanist tradition, and the dying-away of that tradition naturally involves the temporary cessation of cultural creativeness.

From this point of view it is very significant that almost the only original element in the thought of the new age should be the work of Jews. In physical science the dominant figure is Einstein, in psychology it is Freud, in economics and sociology it is Marx—and each of them has exerted an influence on the thought of the age that far transcends the limits of his particular subject. And it is easy to understand the reasons of this. The Jewish mind alone in the West has its own sources of life which are independent of the Hellenic and the Renaissance traditions. It has seen too many civilisations rise and fall to be discouraged by the failure of humanism. On the contrary it thrives in an atmosphere of determinism and historical destiny, which seems fatal to the humanist spirit. This holds good especially of the Marxian attitude, which is characteristic of the new conditions, although it originated at a time when liberalism and romanticism were still flourishing. But Marx addressed himself to those elements in the modern world which were already deprived of any share in the heritage of humanist culture. He found the proletariat enslaved to the machine, and he sought, not

to destroy this servitude, but to equalise and rationalise it by extending it to the whole social organism.

Thus, in Marx, the cult of equality and social justice led to the sacrifice of human freedom and spiritual creativeness to an inhuman economic whole. He condemned the whole humanistic morality and culture as bourgeois, and accepted the machine, not only as the basis of economic activity, but as the explanation of the mystery of life itself. The mechanical processes of economic life are the ultimate realities of history and human life. All other things—religion, art, philosophy, spiritual life—stand on a lower plane of reality; they are a dream world of shadows cast on the sleeping mind by the physical processes of the real world of matter and mechanism. Hence Marxism may be seen as the culminating point of the modern tendency to explain that which is specifically human in terms of something else. For the Marxian interpretation of history is in fact nothing but an explaining away of history. It professes to guide us to the heart of the problem, and it merely unveils a void. And thus, according to Berdyaev, the essential importance of Marxism is to be found not in its constructive proposals, but in its negations, its sweeping away of the semi-ideological constructions of nineteenth-century thought. For the optimistic rationalism of the nineteenth century tended to hide the true significance of the conflict between materialism and spiritualism. Just as behind all religion and all spiritual philosophy there is a metaphysical

assent—the affirmation of Being—so behind materialism and the materialist explaining away of history there is a metaphysical negation—the denial of Being—which is the ultimate and quasi-mystical ground of the materialistic position. In Berdyaev's words, "Man must either incorporate himself in this mystery of Not-being, and sink in the abyss of Not-being, or he must return to the inner mystery of human destiny and unite himself once again with the sacred traditions" that are the true basis of the historical process.¹

The Western observer will probably question the metaphysical importance which Berdyaev attributes to the Marxian doctrine. It is, however, impossible to deny the connection between Communism and historical materialism, and the former actually derives much of its moral driving force from a quasi-religious devotion to the materialistic theory. There is no mistaking the note of sombre religious enthusiasm that characterises, for example, Lenin's attitude to the metaphysical side of the Marxian creed. When he attacks Mach for having "betrayed materialism with a kiss," he is not speaking in jest. He is condemning what he regards as an act of spiritual apostasy.

But this attitude finds a much more congenial atmosphere in Russia, where the religious impulse has always had a tendency towards Nihilism, than in the West. In Western Europe the decadence of the humanist tradition

¹ Berdyaev, *Der Sinn der Geschichte*, pp. 34-35.

has left the European mind so weak that it is no longer capable of any metaphysical conviction. The greatest danger here is not that we should actively adopt the Bolshevik cult of Marxian materialism, but rather that we should yield ourselves passively to a practical materialisation of culture after the American pattern. The Communists may have deified mechanism in theory, but it is the Americans who have realised it in practice. They have adapted themselves to the conditions of the new age earlier and more completely than the peoples of the Old World, partly because the external circumstances of American life were more favourable, but most of all because they were spiritually more independent of the humanist tradition. The Renaissance culture that had its centre in the courts and capitals of Europe left America almost untouched. The American tradition is founded on Calvinism, which governed the social life of the Northern States down to the nineteenth century, and which possessed an almost complete monopoly of higher education; while in the new lands outside the old colonial territory, the churches, whether Calvinist or Baptist or Methodist, were still all-important, and humanist education, which was still so powerful in Europe, was practically non-existent.

Now the social effect of Calvinism and of American Protestantism in general is to create an immensely strong moral motive for action without any corresponding intellectual ideal. It is a culture of the will rather than of the

understanding—a purely ethical discipline which neglects intellectual and æsthetic values. This attitude remains characteristic of American civilisation even in its secular development. Thus the ideals of humanist democracy, which were received from France in the revolutionary period, were stripped of their intellectual element and moralised as a justification for the unregulated activity of the ordinary man. This led, on the one hand, to the individualistic cult of material success and, on the other, to a humanitarian idealism that is in reality nothing else but the same ideal in a socialised form. No doubt these ideals still preserved some of the moral inspiration that derives from the Puritan tradition, just as European liberalism retained something of the humanist tradition. But when this religious inspiration has evaporated, American civilisation without Calvinism, like modern European civilisation without humanism, becomes a body without a soul. And it is this dead civilisation which is apotheosised in the mythology of Hollywood and which is invading the Old World with all the prestige of its vast material achievement. It possesses a kind of pseudo-humanist appeal since it offers the ordinary man and woman the vision of a wider and richer life. The new machine-made civilisation may be destructive of the finer pleasures in life, but under the old conditions these were only accessible to a small number. The ordinary man gets more satisfaction from his cinema and his daily paper than from grand opera or classi-

cal literature. If modern civilisation is able to pay its way, if it is not upset by some unexpected economic or military catastrophe, we have no reason to suppose that it will be undermined by any movement of popular dissatisfaction. On the contrary, the whole tendency of democratic politics and social reform and economic progress is to extend the sway of this standardised industrial mass-civilisation. Nor can education improve matters, since if the teacher himself is without a humanist tradition or a spiritual discipline he cannot impart them to others. And science is equally unhelpful, since, when it is once separated from the humanist tradition, it becomes as utilitarian and materialistic as industrialism. The ordinary man knows and cares nothing for it, and the leader of industry and the politician value it only as the servant of the machine. The only remedy is to be found in man himself—in the renewal of the human image which was once impressed so clearly on our Western civilisation, but which has now become disfigured and effaced.

HUMANISM AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

THE realisation of the decline of the humanist tradition and the prospect of the complete mechanisation of our civilisation have produced a striking change in the modern intellectual attitude towards religion. The last generation—the generation of H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw—was still prepared to idealise the machine and to place its hopes in a mechanised Utopia. The present generation has lost this confidence and is beginning to feel the need for a return to religion and a recovery of the religious attitude to life which the European mind has lost during the last two or three centuries.

And this feeling is no longer confined to the Conservatives and the supporters of the traditional intellectual order, as was largely the case in the last century. On the contrary, it is especially characteristic of the most modern of the moderns and of those who are in revolt against the existing order of things—of men like the late D. H. Lawrence and Mr. Middleton Murry and Mr. T. S. Eliot in this country, of Hugo Ball and Stefan Georg in Germany, and of Jacques Rivière, Charles du Bos and François Mauriac in France.

In the latter country alone it has taken the form of a complete acceptance of orthodox Catholicism. Elsewhere, and especially in England, it still retains to a great extent the ideals of humanism and of the Enlightenment, for it is found most of all among those who have remained faithful to the humanist tradition, while at the same time they feel the necessity of finding a new spiritual basis which may protect it against the standardised mass-civilisation of the new age. Consequently they retain the old rationalist hostility to the idea of the supernatural and the transcendent. They have come to realise the dangers that a thorough-going scientific materialism or even a rationalism of the eighteenth-century type involves from the point of view of humanism. They are prepared to admit spiritual values and even the validity of mystical experience, but they still hold fast to the fundamental dogmas of naturalism—the denial of the transcendent and the conception of the universe as a closed order ruled by uniform scientific law. They seek a *natural* religion in the sense of a religion without metaphysic or dogma or revelation—a religion without God.

Now a religion of this kind would certainly possess the advantage of being easily reconcilable on the one hand with the ethical tradition of humanism and on the other with the world-view of scientific naturalism, but it does not follow that it would solve our religious problems or provide modern civilisation with the spiritual dynamic of

which it stands in need. For there are two factors to be considered. Just as it is possible to conceive of a religion which will satisfy man's religious needs without being applicable to the social situation of modern Europe—as, for example, in Buddhism—so we can construct, at least in theory, a religion which would be adapted to the social needs of modern civilisation, but which would be incapable of satisfying the purely religious demands of the human spirit. Such a religion was constructed with admirable ingenuity and sociological knowledge by Comte in the nineteenth century, and it proved utterly lacking in religious vitality, and consequently also in human appeal. And a similar experiment which is being carried out with far less knowledge and greater passion by the modern Communists in Russia threatens to be even more sterile and inimical to man's spiritual personality.

It is useless to judge a religion from the point of view of the politician or the social reformer. We shall never create a living religion merely as a means to an end, a way out of our practical difficulties. For the religious view of life is the opposite to the utilitarian. It regards the world and human life *sub specie æternitatis*. It is only by accepting the religious point of view, by regarding religion as an end in itself and not as a means to something else, that we can discuss religious problems profitably. It may be said that this point of view belongs to the past, and that we cannot return to it. But neither can we escape from it. The past is simply the record of the experience of humanity,

and if that experience testifies to the existence of a permanent human need, that need must manifest itself in the future no less than in the past.

What, then, is man's essential religious need, judging by the experience of the past? There is an extraordinary degree of unanimity in the response, although, of course, it is not complete. One answer is God, the supernatural, the transcendent; the other answer is deliverance, salvation, eternal life. And both these two elements are represented in some form or other in any given religion. The religion of ancient Israel, for example, may seem to concentrate entirely on the first of these two elements—the reality of God—and to have nothing to say about the immortality of the soul and the idea of eternal life. Yet the teaching of the prophets is essentially a doctrine of salvation—a social and earthly salvation, it is true, but nevertheless a salvation which is essentially religious and related to the eternal life of God. Again, Buddhism seems to leave no room for God and to put the whole emphasis of its teaching on the second element—deliverance. Nevertheless, it is based, as much as any religion can be, on the idea of Transcendence. Indeed, it was an exaggerated sense of Transcendence that led to its negative attitude towards the ideas of God and the Soul. "We affirm something of God, in order not to affirm nothing," says the Catholic theologian. The Buddhist went a step further on the *via negativa* and preferred to say nothing.

Now, a concentration on these two specifically religious

needs produces an attitude to life totally opposed to the practical utilitarian outlook of the ordinary man. The latter regards the world of man—the world of sensible experience and social activity—as the one reality, and is sceptical of anything that lies beyond, whether in the region of pure thought or of spiritual experience, not to speak of religious faith. The religious man, on the contrary, turns his scepticism against the world of man. He is conscious of the existence of another and greater world of spiritual reality in which we live and move and have our being, though it is hidden from us by the veil of sensible things. He may even think, like Newman, that the knowledge of the senses has a merely symbolic value; that “the whole series of impressions made on us by the senses may be but a Divine economy suited to our need, and the token of realities distinct from them, and such as might be revealed to us, nay, more perfectly, by other senses as different from our existing ones as they are from one another.”¹

The one ultimate reality is the Being of God, and the world of man and nature itself are only real in so far as they have their ground and principle of being in that supreme reality. In the words of a French writer of the seventeenth century: “It is the presence of God that, without cessation, draws the creation from the abyss of its own nothingness above which His omnipotence holds it sus-

¹ *University Sermons*, p. 350. In this remarkable passage he develops a parallelism between the symbolic character of sensible knowledge and that of mathematical calculi and musical notation.

pended, lest of its own weight it should fall back therein; and serves as the mortar and bond of connection which holds it together in order that all that it has of its Creator should not waste and flow away like water that is not kept in its channel."

Thus, although God is not myself, nor a part of my being, "yet the relation of dependence that my life, my powers, and my operations bear to His Presence is more absolute, more essential, and more intimate than any relation I can have to the natural principles without which I could not exist . . . I draw my life from His Living Life . . . ; I am, I understand, I will, I act, I imagine, I smell, I taste, I touch, I see, I walk and I love in the Infinite Being of God, within the Divine Essence and substance. . . .

"God in the heavens is more my heaven than the heavens themselves; in the sun He is more my light than the sun; in the air He is more my air than the air that I breathe sensibly. . . . He works in me all that I am, all that I see, all that I do or can do, as most intimate, most present, and most immanent in me, as the super-essential Author and Principle of my works, without whom we should melt away and disappear from ourselves and from our own activities." ¹

Or again, to quote Cardinal Bona, God is "the Ocean

¹ *Chardon, la Croix de Jesus*, pp. 422, 423, in Bremond, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France*, viii, pp. 21-2.

of all essence and existence, the very Being itself which contains all being. From Him all things depend; they flow out from Him and flow back to Him and *are* in so far as they participate in His Being.”¹

Thus the whole universe is, as it were, the shadow of God, and has its being in the contemplation or reflection of the Being of God. The spiritual nature reflects the Divine consciously, while the animal nature is a passive and unconscious mirror. Nevertheless, even the life of the animal is a living manifestation of the Divine, and the flight of the hawk or the power of the bull is an unconscious prayer. Man alone stands between these two kingdoms in the strange twilight world of rational consciousness. He possesses a kind of knowledge which transcends the sensible without reaching the intuition of the Divine.

It is only the mystic who can escape from this twilight world; who, in Sterry's words, can “descry a glorious eternity in a winged moment of Time—a bright Infinite in the narrow point of an object, who knows what Spirit means—that spire-top whither all things ascend harmoniously, where they meet and sit connected in an unfathomed Depth of Life.” But the mystic is not the normal man; he is one who has transcended, at least momentarily, the natural limits of human knowledge. The ordinary man is by his nature immersed in the world of sense, and uses his reason in order to subjugate the material world to his own ends,

¹ Bona. *Via Compendii ad Deum*.

to satisfy his appetites and to assert his will. He lives on the animal plane with a more than animal consciousness and purpose, and in so far, he is less religious than the animal. The life of pure spirit is religious, and the life of the animal is also religious, since it is wholly united with the life-force that is its highest capacity of being. Only man is capable of separating himself alike from God and from nature, of making himself his last end and living a purely self-regarding and irreligious existence.

And yet the man who deliberately regards self-assertion and sensual enjoyment as his sole ends, and finds complete satisfaction in them—the pure materialist—is not typical; he is almost as rare as the mystic. The normal man has an obscure sense of the existence of a spiritual reality and a consciousness of the evil and misery of an existence which is the slave of sensual impulse and self-interest and which must inevitably end in physical suffering and death. But how is he to escape from this wheel to which he is bound by the accumulated weight of his own acts and desires? How is he to bring his life into vital relation with that spiritual reality of which he is but dimly conscious and which transcends all the categories of his thought and the conditions of human experience? This is the fundamental religious problem which has perplexed and baffled the mind of man from the beginning and is, in a sense, inherent in his nature.

I have intentionally stated the problem in its fullest and

most classical form, as it has been formulated by the great minds of our own civilisation, since the highest expression of an idea is usually also the most explicit and the most intelligible. But, as the writers whom I have quoted would themselves maintain, there is nothing specifically Christian about it. It is common to Christianity and to Platonism, and to the religious traditions of the ancient East. It is the universal attitude of the *anima naturaliter Christiana*, of that nature which the mediæval mystics term "noble," because it is incapable of resting satisfied with a finite or sensible good. It is "natural religion" not, indeed, after the manner of the religion of naturalism that we have already mentioned, but in the true sense of the word.

It is, of course, obvious that such conceptions of spiritual reality presuppose a high level of intellectual development and that we cannot expect to find them in a pre-philosophic stage of civilisation. Nevertheless, however far back we go in history, and however primitive is the type of culture, we do find evidence for the existence of specifically religious needs and ideas of the supernatural which are the primitive prototypes or analogues of the conceptions which we have just described.

Primitive man believes no less firmly than the religious man of the higher civilisations in the existence of a spiritual world upon which the visible world and the life of man are dependent. Indeed, this spiritual world is often more intensely realised and more constantly present to his

mind than is the case with civilised man. He has not attained to the conception of an autonomous natural order, and consequently supernatural forces are liable to interpose themselves at every moment of his existence. At first sight the natural and the supernatural, the material and the spiritual, seem inextricably confused. Nevertheless, even in primitive nature-worship, the object of religious emotion and worship is never the natural phenomenon as such, but always the supernatural power which is obscurely felt to be present in and working through the natural object.

The essential difference between the religion of the primitive and that of civilised man is that for the latter the spiritual world has become a cosmos, rendered intelligible by philosophy and ethical by the tradition of the world religions, whereas to the primitive it is a spiritual chaos in which good and evil, high and low, rational and irrational elements are confusedly mingled. Writers on primitive religion have continually gone astray through their attempts to reduce the spiritual world of the primitive to a single principle, to find a single cause from which the whole development may be explained and rendered intelligible. Thus Tylor finds the key in the belief in ghosts, Durkheim in the theory of an impersonal *mana* which is the exteriorisation of the collective mind, and Frazer in the technique of magic. But in reality there is no single aspect of primitive religion that can be isolated and regarded as the origin of all the rest. The spiritual world of

the primitive is far less unified than that of civilised man. High gods, nature spirits, the ghosts of the dead, malevolent demons, and impersonal supernatural forces and substances may all co-exist in it without forming any kind of spiritual system or hierarchy. Every primitive culture will tend to lay the religious emphasis on some particular point. In Central Africa witchcraft and the cult of ghosts may overshadow everything else; among the hunters of North America the emphasis may be laid on the visionary experience of the individual, and the cult of animal guardians; and among the Hamitic peoples the sky-god takes the foremost place. But it is dangerous to conclude that the point on which attention is focussed is the whole field of consciousness. The high gods are often conceived as too far from man to pay much attention to his doings, and it is lesser powers—the spirits of the field and the forest, or the ghosts of the dead—who come into closest relation with human life, and whose malevolence is most to be feared.

Consequently primitive religion is apt to appear wholly utilitarian and concerned with purely material ends. But here also the confusion of primitive thought is apt to mislead us. The ethical aspect of religion is not consciously recognised and cultivated as it is by civilised man, but it is none the less present in an obscure way. Primitive religion is essentially an attempt to bring man's life into relation with, and under the sanctions of, that other world of mysterious and sacred powers, whose action is always con-

ceived as the ultimate and fundamental law of life. Moreover, the sense of sin and of the need for purification or catharsis is very real to primitive man. No doubt sin appears to him as a kind of physical contagion that seems to us of little moral value. Nevertheless, as we can see from the history of Greek religion, the sense of ritual defilement and that of moral guilt are very closely linked with one another, and the idea of an essential connection between moral and physical evil—between sin and death, for example—is found in the higher religions no less than among the primitives. *Libera nos a malo* is a universal prayer which answers to one of the oldest needs of human nature.

But the existence of this specifically religious need in primitive man—in other words, the naturalness of the religious attitude—is widely denied at the present day. It is maintained that primitive man is a materialist and that the attempt to find in primitive religion an obscure sense of the reality of spirit, or, indeed, anything remotely analogous to the religious experience of civilised man, is sheer metaphysical theorising. This criticism is partly due to a tendency to identify any recognition of the religious element in primitive thought and culture with the particular theories of religious origins which have been put forward by Tylor and Durkheim. In reality, however, the theories of the latter have much more in common with those of the modern writers whom I have mentioned than

any of them have with the point of view of writers who recognise the objective and autonomous character of religion. All of them show that anti-metaphysical prejudice which has been so general during the last generation or two, and which rejects on *a priori* grounds any objective interpretation of religious experience. On the Continent there is already a reaction against the idea of a "science of religion" which, unlike the other sciences, destroys its own object and leaves us with a residuum of facts that belong to a totally different order. In fact, recent German writers such as Otto, Heiler, and Karl Beth tend rather to exaggerate the mystical and intuitive character of religious experience, whether in its primitive or advanced manifestations. But in this country the anti-metaphysical prejudice is still dominant. A theory is not regarded as "scientific" unless it explains religion in terms of something else—as an artificial construction from non-religious elements.

Thus Professor Perry writes: "The idea of deity has grown up with civilisation itself, and in its beginnings it was constructed out of the most homely materials." He holds that religion was derived not from primitive speculation or symbolism nor from spiritual experience, but from a practical observation of the phenomena of life. Its origins are to be found in the association of certain substances, such as red earth, shells, crystals, etc., with the ideas of life and fertility and their use as amulets or

fetishes in order to prolong life or to increase the sexual powers. From these beginnings religion was developed as a purely empirical system of ensuring material prosperity by the archaic culture in Egypt and was thence gradually diffused throughout the world by Egyptian treasure-seekers and megalith-builders. The leaders of these expeditions became the first gods, while the Egyptian practices of mummification and tomb-building were the source of all those ideas concerning the nature of the soul and the existence of a spiritual world that are found among primitive peoples.

It is needless for us to discuss the archæological aspects of this pan-Egyptian hypothesis of cultural origins. From our present point of view the main objection to the theory lies in the naïve Euhemerism of its attitude to religion. For even if we grant that the whole development of higher civilisation has proceeded from a single centre, that is a very different thing from admitting that a fundamental type of human experience could ever find its origin in a process of cultural diffusion. It is not as though Professor Perry maintained that primitive man lived a completely animal existence before the coming of the higher culture. On the contrary, the whole tendency of his thought has been to vindicate the essential *humanity* of the primitive. It is the claim of "the new anthropology" that it rehabilitates human nature itself and "disentangles the original nature of man from the systems, tradition, and machinery

of civilisation which have modified it.”¹ If, then, primitive man is non-religious, the conclusion follows that human nature itself is non-religious, and religion, like war, is an artificial product of later development.

But this conclusion has been reached only by the forced construction that has been arbitrarily put upon the evidence. Because the primitive fetish has no more religious value for us than the mascot that we put on our motor-cars, we assume that it can have meant nothing more to primitive man. This, however, is to fall into the same error for which Mr. Massingham rightly condemns the older anthropology—the neglect of the factor of degeneration. Our mascot is a kind of fetish, but it is a degenerate fetish, and it is degenerate precisely because it has lost its religious meaning. The religious man no longer uses mascots, though if he is a Catholic he may use the image of a saint. To the primitive man his fetish is more than the one and less than the other. It has the sanctity of a relic and the irrationality of a mascot. Professor Lowie has described how an Indian offered to show him “the greatest thing in the world”; how he reverently uncovered one cloth wrapper after another; and how at length there lay exposed a simple bunch of feathers—a mere nothing to the alien onlooker, but to the owner a badge of his covenant with the supernatural world. “It is easy,” he says, “to speak of the veneration extended to such badges . . . as

¹ H. J. Massingham, *The Heritage of Man*, p. 142.

fetishism, but that label with its popular meaning is monstrously inadequate to express the psychology of the situation. For to the Indian the material object is nothing apart from its sacred associations.”¹

So, too, when Mr. Massingham speaks of primitive religion as “a purely supernatural machinery, controlled by man, for insuring the material welfare of the community,” he is right in his description of facts, but wrong in his appreciation of values. To us, agriculture is merely a depressed industry which provides the raw material of our dinners, and so we assume that a religion that is largely concerned with agriculture must have been a sordid materialistic business. But this is entirely to misconceive primitive man’s attitude to nature. To him, agriculture was not a sordid occupation; it was one of the supreme mysteries of life, and he surrounded it with religious rites because he believed that the fertility of the soil and the mystery of generation could only be ensured through the co-operation of higher powers. Primitive agriculture was in fact a kind of liturgy.

For us nature has lost this religious atmosphere because the latter has been transferred elsewhere. Civilisation did not create the religious attitude or the essential nature of the religious experience, but it gave them new modes of expression and a new intellectual interpretation. This was the achievement of the great religions or religious philoso-

¹ R. H. Lowie, *Primitive Religion*, p. 19.

phies that arose in all the main centres of ancient civilisation about the middle of the first millennium B.C.¹ They attained to the two fundamental concepts of metaphysical being and ethical order, which have been the foundation of religious thought and the framework of religious experience ever since. Some of these movements of thought, such as Brahmanism, Taoism, and the Eleatic philosophy, concentrated their attention on the idea of Being, while others, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, and the philosophy of Heraclitus, emphasised the idea of moral order; but all of them agreed in identifying the cosmic principle, the power behind the world, with a spiritual principle, conceived either as the source of being or as the source of ethical order.² Primitive man had already found the Transcendent immanent in and working through nature as the supernatural. The new religions found it in thought as the supreme Reality and in ethics as the Eternal Law. And consequently, while the former still saw the spiritual world diffused and confused with the world of matter, the latter isolated it and set it over against the world of human experience, as Eternity against Time, as the Absolute against the Contingent, as Reality against Appearance, and as the Spiritual against the Sensible.

¹ I have discussed this movement at greater length in *Progress and Religion*, ch. vi.

² This may not appear obvious in the case of Buddhism. It is, however, implicit in the doctrine of Karma as the ground of the world process.

This was indeed the discovery of a new world for the religious consciousness. It was thereby liberated from the power of the nature daimons and the dark forces of magic and translated to a higher sphere—to the Brahma-world—"where there is not darkness, nor day nor night, not being nor not-being, but the Eternal alone, the source of the ancient wisdom," to the Kingdom of Ahura and the Six Immortal Holy Ones, to the world of the Eternal Forms, the true home of the soul. And this involved a corresponding change in the religious attitude. The religious life was no longer bound up with irrational myths and non-moral tabus; it was a process of spiritual discipline directed towards the purification of the mind and the will—a conversion of the soul from the life of the senses to spiritual reality. The religious experience of primitive man had become obscured by magic and diabolism, and the visions and trances of the Shaman belong rather to the phenomena of Spiritualism than of mysticism. The new type of religious experience, on the other hand, had reached a higher plane. It consisted in an intuition that was essentially spiritual and found its highest realisation in the vision of the mystic.

Thus each of the new religio-philosophic traditions—Brahmanism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Platonism—ultimately transcends philosophy and culminates in mysticism. They are not satisfied with the demonstration of the Absolute; they demand the experience of the Absolute also,

whether it be the vision of the Essential Good and the Essential Beauty, through which the soul is made deiform, or that intuition of the nothingness and illusion inherent in all contingent being which renders a man *jivana mukti*, "delivered alive." But how is such an experience conceivable? It seems to be a contradiction in terms—to know the Unknowable, to grasp the Incomprehensible, to receive the Infinite. Certainly it transcends the categories of human thought and the normal conditions of human experience. Yet it has remained for thousands of years as the goal—whether attainable or unattainable—of the religious life; and no religion which ignores this aspiration can prove permanently satisfying to man's spiritual needs. The whole religious experience of mankind—indeed, the very existence of religion itself—testifies, not only to a sense of the Transcendent, but to an appetite for the Transcendent that can only be satisfied by immediate contact—by a vision of the supreme Reality. It is the goal of the intellect as well as of the will, for, as a Belgian philosopher has said, "The human mind is a *faculty in quest of its intuition*, that is to say, of assimilation with Being," and it is "perpetually chased from the movable, manifold and deficient towards the Absolute, the One and the Infinite, that is, towards *Being pure and simple*." ¹

A religion that remains on the rational level and denies

¹ J. Maréchal, *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics*; trans. Algar Thorold. 1927, pp. 101, 133.

the possibility of any real relation with a higher order of spiritual reality, fails in its most essential function, and ultimately, like Deism, ceases to be a religion at all. It may perhaps be objected that this view involves the identification of religion with mysticism, and that it would place a philosophy of intuition like that of the Vedanta higher than a religion of faith and supernatural revelation, like Christianity. In reality, however, the Christian insistence on the necessity of faith and revelation implies an even higher conception of transcendence than that of the oriental religions. Faith transcends the sphere of rational knowledge even more than metaphysical intuition, and brings the mind into close contact with super-intelligible reality. Yet faith also, at least when it is joined with spiritual intelligence, is itself a kind of obscure intuition—a foretaste of the unseen—¹ and it also has its culmination in the mystical experience by which these obscure spiritual realities are realised experimentally and intuitively.

Thus Christianity is in agreement with the great oriental religions and with Platonism in its goal of spiritual intuition, though it places the full realisation of that goal at a further and higher stage of spiritual development than the rest. For all of them religion is not an affair of the emotions, but of the intelligence. Religious knowledge is the highest kind of knowledge, the end and coronation of the whole process of man's intellectual development.

¹ Cf. Rousselot, *Les Yeux de la Foi*.

Herein they all differ profoundly from the conceptions of religion and religious experience that have been developed by modern European thinkers. For the modern mind no longer admits the possibility or the objective value of spiritual knowledge. The whole tendency of Western thought since the Renaissance, and still more since the eighteenth century, has been to deny the existence of any real knowledge except that of rational demonstration founded upon sensible experience. Intuition, whether metaphysical or mystical, is regarded as an irrational emotional conviction, and religion is reduced to subjective feeling and moral activity. Such a religion, however, can have no intellectual authority, and in consequence it also loses its social authority and even its moral influence. Civilisation becomes completely rationalised and secularised, as may be seen from the last two centuries of European history.

Nevertheless, man cannot live by reason alone. His spiritual life, and even his physical instincts, are starved in the narrow and arid territory of purely rational consciousness. He is driven to take refuge in the non-rational, whether it be the irrational blend of spirituality and emotionalism that is termed romanticism, or, as is increasingly the case to-day, in the frankly sub-rational sphere of pure sensationalism and sexual impulse.

To-day we are faced with the bankruptcy of rationalism and with the necessity of finding some principle of the reli-

gious order which can rescue us from the resultant confusion. One alternative is that of the late D. H. Lawrence, who accepts the failure of reason, and who seeks to find a basis for the religious consciousness not in spiritual intuition, but in that lower intuition of the senses and the physical life, the reality of which cannot be denied even by the rationalist. He writes:

"Come down from your pre-eminence, O mind,
O lofty spirit!
Your hour has struck,
Your unique day is over,
Absolutism is finished in the human consciousness too.

"A man is many things: he is not only a mind.
But in his consciousness he is twofold at least:
He is cerebral, intellectual, mental, spiritual,
But also he is instinctive, intuitive, and in touch.

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"The blood knows in darkness, and forever dark,
In touch, by intuition, instinctively.
The blood also knows religiously,
And of this the mind is incapable.
The mind is non-religious.

"To my dark heart gods *are*.
In my dark heart love is and is not.
But to my white mind
Gods and love alike are but an idea,
A kind of fiction." ¹

This is, so it seems to me, the inevitable conclusion of the religious mind that no longer conceives the possibility

¹ *Pansies*, pp. 65-66.

of spiritual intuition or supernatural revelation. It is driven back upon the lower type of religious experience, which primitive man possessed when he worshipped the daimonic powers that seemed to rule his life. And yet, even so, Lawrence's position is not wholly consistent, for even the lower type of religious experience is in a real sense spiritual. It is the result of a spiritual intuition, even though that intuition is, as St. Paul says, in bondage to "the weak and beggarly elements" of nature. The religion of the blood of which Lawrence writes, the religion of pure sense and animal instinct, can only be attained by the unreflecting animal soul. If we were conscious of it, we should not have it. It is a true spiritual instinct which prompted Lawrence to revolt against the tyranny of "the white mind" and to seek a deeper wisdom than that of the rational consciousness; but, owing to the denial and repression of true spiritual intuition, it has been deflected into a false cult of the primitive and the physical which can afford no true solution of his problem.

This is fully realised by another writer, who has considerable sympathy with his point of view and who also seeks escape from the present *impasse* in a religious experience. Mr. J. Middleton Murry not only admits the possibility of a spiritual intuition, but makes it the centre of his whole theory of life.

He recognises the insufficiency of the modern scientific point of view that identifies reality with the physical and

biological world. The human mind can only achieve unity with itself and harmony with the universe on the higher "metabiological" plane, in an experience which transcends both sensible and rational knowledge. This experience finds its highest expression in the life of Jesus, and thereby Jesus was the creator of a new series of values and the starting-point of a new phase in the evolution of humanity.

Nevertheless, Mr. Murry holds that the reality that is apprehended in this way is not metaphysical or transcendent; it is simply the organic unity of nature, the unity of biological being. There is no eternal and transcendent being which we can think of as divine, but only the natural organism which is the product of the evolutionary process. For Mr. Murry is an adherent of the dogma of "emergence," a worshipper of the God that we create as we go along.¹ God is a useful fiction, a creature of the human mind, not the ultimate ground of reality. This relativism, however, ill accords with the absolutism of his theory of knowledge. It is difficult to see how we can attain to a metabiological plane of consciousness and activity if there is no corresponding metabiological stage of being. For metabiological activity implies metaphysical being, no less than biological activity involves physical being. We must either accept the reality and autonomy of spiritual being or abandon the possibility of spiritual knowledge. It is true

¹ It is true that he does not term this concept God. Unlike Professor Alexander, he reserves that title to the transcendent God of the old religions.

that the intuition of unity of which Mr. Murry speaks does not necessarily involve the belief in the transcendent personal God of Christian doctrine. It has more affinity with the monism of the Vedanta, or still more with that of Taoism. But it does necessitate, no less than Taoism, the idea of an eternal transcendental principle which is the source and not the product of the cosmic process.

It may be objected that Mr. Murry's philosophy has in fact arisen directly from his spiritual experience, and, consequently, that it cannot be inconsistent with it. But this is not exactly the case. Certainly Mr. Murry's theory of the existence of metabiological values and of a higher form of knowledge than the purely rational springs directly from his experience. But this is not so with regard to his denial of the transcendent and the supernatural. That was due not to his mysticism, but to his adherence to the dogmas of scientific naturalism, and he has interpreted his experience to accord with these preconceived ideas.

He himself points out that his first reaction to his experience was purely religious—a conviction of spiritual reality and spiritual regeneration—and that his mature philosophy is not so much a logical consequence of his mystical experience as the means by which he succeeded in “disintoxicating” himself from it. It is conditioned throughout by his fundamental hostility to any form of supernaturalism—by his conviction that the introduction

of the category of the supernatural involves "mental" and spiritual suicide."¹

This prejudice has been firmly implanted in the modern mind by two centuries of dogmatic naturalism, but it is difficult to understand its rational justification in the present instance. From the point of view of scientific mechanism there is certainly no room for the supernatural, but on that assumption Mr. Murry's category of the metabiological must also be excluded. The anti-supernaturalist view rests fundamentally on the hypothesis of a universe in which quality and value have no meaning and where everything is reducible to matter and energy. If we once admit the possibility of a mode of spiritual consciousness or being which transcends the biological, there seems no reason to regard the human mind as its only field of manifestation.

It is no less reasonable to suppose that the metabiological plane is the point at which a higher order of being has inserted itself into the life of humanity than to suppose that it is a completely new order which has "emerged" from below. Even in the sensible world we have an

¹ This dogmatic acceptance of naturalism has entered so deeply into Mr. Murry's mind that the very idea of the supernatural is rejected with a kind of sacred horror as a blasphemous impiety. He writes: "To introduce, or to be prepared to introduce, the category of the supernatural into my thinking would be mental and spiritual suicide. A world which at a certain point . . . ceased to belong to the natural order is no world for me, a man of the twentieth century, to contemplate or live in; it would be a cheap and vulgar world from which it would be my duty as a man to escape immediately."—*God*, p. 112.

example of the way in which a higher order of being can intervene to modify the natural development of a lower order. From the animals' standpoint, man himself is a supernatural being whose action governs their life in a mysterious way and who even creates, as it were, new creatures like the setter and the racehorse, and admits them to a certain participation in his own life. And why, then, is it irrational to believe that, as Plato says, mankind is "the flock of the Gods," that human life is susceptible to the influence of a higher power which fosters in it those new capacities and modes of being which we call spiritual and metabiological? Such a belief may seem to us incredible, but it is not really irrational. It would indeed be strange if reality did not transcend man's comprehension qualitatively as well as quantitatively. The refusal to admit this possibility rests not so much on reason as on the humanist prejudice which insists that the human mind is the highest of all possible forms of existence and the only standard of reality. It is this prejudice which prevents Mr. Murry from developing the full implications of his religious experience. He has recognised one truth that is vital for religion—that the path of human development must lie in the spiritual, not the physical, world, and that his nature is not wholly earthbound—that it has a window that is open to the infinite. But, on the other hand, he rejects the other truth that is equally vital—the transcendence and absoluteness of spiritual reality. The religious

attitude is only possible in the presence of the eternal and the transcendent. Any object that falls short of this fails to inspire the sense of awe and self-surrender, which is essential to true religion. Man cannot worship himself, nor can he adore a Time God that is the creation of his own mind. As soon as he recognises its fictitious character such an idea loses all its religious power. And for the same reason every attempt to create a new religion on purely rational and human foundations is inevitably doomed to failure.

III

THE CLAIM OF CHRISTIANITY

IF we accept the necessity of an absolute and metaphysical foundation for religion and religious experience, we still have to face the other aspect of the problem—namely, how this spiritual experience is to be brought into living relation with human life and with the social order. The ecstasy of the solitary mind in the presence of absolute reality seems to offer no solution to the actual sufferings and perplexities of humanity. And yet the religious mind cannot dissociate itself from this need, for it can never rest content with a purely individual and self-regarding ideal of deliverance. The more religious a man is, the more is he sensitive to the common need of humanity. All the founders of the world religions—even those, like Buddha, who were the most uncompromising in their religious absolutism—were concerned not merely with their private religious experience, but with the common need of humanity. They aspired to be the saviours and pathfinders—ford-makers, as the Indians termed them—who should rescue their people from the darkness and suffering of human life.

Nowhere is this social preoccupation more insistent than in the religious tradition of the West, and it is to be found even in the most abstract and intellectualist type of religious thought. It is to be seen above all in Plato, the perfect example of the pure metaphysician, who, nevertheless, made his metaphysics the basis of a programme of political and social reform. Indeed, according to his own description in the Seventh Epistle it was his political interests and his realisation of the injustice and moral confusion of the existing state which were the starting point of his metaphysical quest. But though Plato realised as fully as any purely religious teacher the need for bringing social life into contact with spiritual reality and for relating man's rational activity to the higher intuitive knowledge, he failed to show how this could be accomplished by means of a purely intellectual discipline. He saw that it was necessary on the one hand to drag humanity out of the shadow world of appearances and false moral standards into the pure white light of spiritual reality, and, on the other hand, that the contemplative must be forced to leave his mountain of vision and "to descend again to these prisoners and to partake in their toils and honours."¹ But, as he says, the spiritual man is at a disadvantage in the world of politics and business. The eyes that have looked upon the sun can no longer distinguish the shadows of the cave. The man who cares only for eternal things,

¹ *Republic*, 519.

who seeks to fly hence and to become assimilated to God by holiness and justice and wisdom, is unable to strive for political power with the mean cunning of the ordinary "man of affairs." ² In fact nothing could show the impossibility of curing the ills of humanity by pure intelligence more completely than Plato's own attempt to reform the state of Sicily by giving a young tyrant lessons in mathematics. The political problems of the Greek world were solved not by the philosopher-king, but by condottieri and Macedonian generals, and the gulf between the spiritual world and human life grew steadily wider until the coming of Christianity.

In the East, however, the religious conception of life was victorious and dominated the whole field of culture. In India, above all, the ideal of spiritual intuition was not confined to a few philosophers and mystics, but became the goal of the whole religious development. It was, as Professor de la Vallée Poussin has said, "the great discovery that has remained for at least twenty-five centuries the capital and most cherished truth of the Indian people." The man who cannot understand this cannot understand the religion of India or the civilisation with which it is so intimately connected. It is, however, only too easy for the Western mind to misconceive the whole tendency of Indian thought. It is apt to interpret the teaching of the Upanishads on the lines of Western idealist philosophy, and to see in the Indian doctrine of contemplation a

² *Theætetus*, 176.

philosophic pantheism that is intellectualist rather than religious. In reality it is in Western mystics such as Eckart or Angelus Silesius rather than in philosophers such as Hegel or even Spinoza that the true parallel to the thought of the Vedanta is to be found. It leads not to pantheism in our sense of the word, but to an extreme theory of transcendence which may be termed super-theism. Western pantheism is a kind of spiritual democracy in which all things are equally God; but the "non-dualism" of the Vedanta is a spiritual absolutism in which God is the only reality. At first sight there may seem to be little practical difference between the statement that everything that exists is divine and the statement that nothing but the divine exists. But from the religious point of view there is all the difference in the world. For "if this transitory world be the Real," says a mediæval Vedantist, "then there is no liberation through the Atman, the holy scriptures are without authority and the Lord speaks untruth. . . . The Lord who knows the reality of things has declared 'I am not contained in these things, nor do beings dwell in Me.' " ¹

God is the one Reality. Apart from Him, nothing exists. In comparison with Him, nothing is real. The universe only exists in so far as it is rooted and grounded in His Being. He is the Self of our selves and the Soul of our souls. So far the Vedanta does not differ essentially from the teaching of Christian theology. The one vital distinc-

¹ *Vivekachudamani* (attributed to Sankara), trans. C. Johnston, p. 41.

tion consists in the fact that Indian religion ignores the idea of creation and that in consequence it is faced with the dilemma that either the whole universe is an illusion—Maya—a dream that vanishes when the soul awakens to the intuition of spiritual reality, or else that the world is the self-manifestation of the Divine Mind, a conditional embodiment of the absolute Being.

Hence there is no room for a real intervention of the spiritual principle in human life. The Indian ethic is, above all, an ethic of flight—of deliverance from conditional existence and from the chain of re-birth. Human life is an object of compassion to the wise man, but it is also an object of scorn. “As the hog to the trough, goes the fool to the womb,” says the Buddhist verse; and the Hindu attitude, if less harsh, is not essentially different. “Men are held by the manifold snares of the desires in the world of sense, and they fall away without winning to their end like dykes of sand in water. Like sesame-grains for their oil, all things are ground out in the mill-wheel of creation by the oil-grinders, to wit, the taints arising from ignorance that fasten upon them. The husband gathers to himself evil works on account of his wife; but he alone is therefore afflicted with taints, which cling to man alike in the world beyond and in this. All men are attached to children, wives and kin; they sink down in the slimy sea of sorrow, like age-worn forest-elephants.”¹

¹ *Mahabharata*, xii, ch. 174, trans. L. D. Barnett.

It is true that orthodox Hinduism inculcates the fulfilment of social duties, and the need for outward activity, but this principle does not lead to the transformation of life by moral action, but simply to the fatalistic acceptance of the established order of things. This is the theme of the greatest work of Indian literature, the Bhagavad-Gita, and it involves a moral attitude diametrically opposed to that of the Western mind. When Arjuna shrinks from the evils of war and declares that he would rather die than shed the blood of his kinsfolk, the god does not commend him. He uses the doctrine of the transcendence and impassibility of true being to justify the ruthlessness of the warrior.

"Know that that which pervades this universe is imperishable; there is none can make to perish that changeless being.

" . . . This Body's Tenant for all time may not be wounded, O Thou of Bharata's stock, in the bodies of any beings. Therefore thou dost not well to sorrow for any born beings. Looking likewise in thine own Law, thou shouldst not be dismayed; for to a knight there is no thing more blest than a lawful strife." ¹

The sacred order that is the basis of Indian culture is no true spiritualisation of human life; it is merely the natural order seen through a veil of metaphysical idealism. It can incorporate the most barbaric and non-ethical ele-

¹ *Bhagavad-Gita*, ii., pp. 17, 30-31, trans. L. D. Barnett.

ments equally with the most profound metaphysical truths; since in the presence of the absolute and the unconditioned all distinctions and degrees of value lose their validity.

The experience of India is sufficient to show that it is impossible to construct a dynamic religion on metaphysical principles alone, since pure intuition affords no real basis for social action. On the other hand, if we abandon the metaphysical element and content ourselves with purely ethical and social ideals, we are still further from a solution, since there is no longer any basis for a spiritual order. The unity of the inner world dissolves in subjectivism and scepticism, and society is threatened with anarchy and dissolution. And since social life is impossible without order, it is necessary to resort to some external principle of compulsion, whether political or economic. In the ancient world this principle was found in the military despotism of the Roman Empire, and in the modern world we have the even more complete and far-reaching organisation of the economic machine. Here indeed we have an order, but it is an order that is far more inhuman and indifferent to moral values than the static theocratic order of the Oriental religion-cultures.

But is there no alternative between Americanism and Orientalism, between a spiritual order that takes no account of human needs and a material order that has no regard for spiritual values. There still remains the tradi-

tional religion of our own civilisation: Christianity, a religion that is neither wholly metaphysical nor merely ethical, but one that brings the spiritual world into vital and fruitful communion with the life of man.

The whole spiritual inheritance of European civilisation is based upon Christianity, and even to-day whatever there is of religious life and spiritual aspiration in the West still draws its vitality from Christian sources.

Nevertheless it must be admitted that for centuries Christianity has been progressively losing its hold on Western culture, and both its doctrines and its moral ideals have fallen into discredit. The causes of this state of things lie deep in that process of the humanisation and rationalising of Western culture which I described in the earlier part of this essay. Ever since the Renaissance the centrifugal tendencies in our civilisation have destroyed its spiritual unity and divided its spiritual forces. The Western mind has turned away from the contemplation of the absolute and the eternal to the knowledge of the particular and the contingent. It has made man the measure of all things and has sought to emancipate human life from its dependence on the supernatural. Instead of the whole intellectual and social order being subordinated to spiritual principles, every activity has declared its independence, and we see politics, economics, science and art organising themselves as autonomous kingdoms which owe no allegiance to any higher power.

And these tendencies were not confined to the secular side of life; they made themselves felt in religion also. Religion came to be regarded as one among a number of competing interests—a limited department of life, which had no jurisdiction over the rest. And as it lost its universal authority, it lost its universal vision; it became sectionalised and rationalised with the rest of European life. The ancient unity of Christendom fell asunder into a mass of warring sects, which were so absorbed in their internecine feuds that they were hardly conscious of their loss of spiritual vision and social authority. In Catholic Europe, it is true, the Church maintained its universal claims and its absolute metaphysical principles, but there also it was gradually extruded from the control of social and intellectual life, and forced to concentrate itself on the inner defences of the altar and the cloister. By the nineteenth century the forces of secularism and “anti-clericalism” were everywhere triumphant, and the new Latin democracies seemed bent on the creation of a purely “lay” culture, which should eliminate the last traces of religious influence from the national life.

But it is in Northern Europe that we can most clearly trace the disintegrating effects of modern culture within Christianity itself. Here Catholicism was replaced by a new conception of Christianity that gave free scope to the centrifugal tendencies of the Western mind. Protestantism eliminated the metaphysical element in the Christian tradition. It abolished asceticism and monasticism; it sub-

ordinated contemplation to action and the intelligence to the will. God was no longer conceived as the Super-essential Being, from Whom the created universe receives all that it has of reality and intelligibility, but as a "magnified non-natural man, who likes and dislikes, knows and decrees, just as a man, only on a scale immensely transcending anything of which we have experience."¹

It is true that Luther's own religious experience was both genuine and profound, but it was not the positive intuition of the contemplative; it was a dark and tormented sense of man's utter helplessness and of the otherness of the Divine Power. For his discarding of the intellectual element in religion had brought his mind back, as it were, to the religious attitude of primitive man who sees the Divine as an unknown and hostile power from which he recoils in terror. "Yea," he writes, "God is more terrible and frightful than the Devil, for He dealeth with us and bringeth us to ruin with power, smiteth and hammereth us and payeth no heed to us. 'In His majesty He is a consuming fire.' For therefrom can no man refrain; if he thinketh on God aright his heart in his body is stricken with terror. . . . Yea, as soon as he heareth God named he is filled with trepidation and fear." "For He assaileth a man and has such a delight therein that He is of His Jealousy and Wrath impelled to consume the wicked."²

But Luther's personal attitude is decidedly abnormal

¹ Matthew Arnold, *St. Paul and Protestantism*, p. 14.

² Quoted by R. Otto in *The Idea of the Holy*, pp. 102-103.

and non-representative; the normal Protestant religious experience is of the milder and more emotional type represented by pietism and revivalism. Here faith is no longer conceived as a super-rational knowledge founded on the Divine Reason, but as a subjective conviction of one's own conversion and justification, and in place of the spiritual ecstasy of the mystic, who realises his own nothingness, we have the self-conscious attitude of the pietist, who is intensely preoccupied with his own feelings and with the moral state of his neighbour. And this substitution of the ideal of pietism for those of asceticism and mysticism eventually led to the weakening and discrediting of the ethical ideals of Christianity, just as sectarianism undermined its social authority. However unjust may be the popular caricature of the pietist as a snuffling hypocrite of the type of Tribulation Wholesome or Zeal-of-the-Land Busy or Mr. Chadband, there can be no doubt that Puritan and Evangelical pietism succeeded in making religion supremely unattractive in a way that mediæval asceticism had never done.

And, at the same time, the divorce of dogma at once from ecclesiastical tradition and from philosophy eventually left it helpless before rationalist criticism. It is true that nothing could have been further from the intention of the Reformers. In fact, it was the very vehemence of their conviction of the absolute transcendence and incomprehensibility of the Divine action that led them to reject

alike the supernatural authority of the Church and the natural rights of human intelligence, and to fall back on the testimony of personal experience and the infallible authority of Scripture. But, though they succeeded in erecting on these foundations a system of dogma more rigid and more exclusive than that which it replaced, the whole dogmatic edifice rested on an arbitrary subjective basis and had no internal coherence or consistency. It incorporated a great part of the traditional patristic and scholastic theology, which really formed an organic element of the Catholic tradition that it professed to reject. Hence, as Harnack has shown, the work of the Reformation was confused and incomplete, and produced at first merely an impoverished version of traditional Catholicism. It required a long process of criticism and historical inquiry before the kernel of Protestant doctrine could be freed from its husk of traditional dogma.

With the advance of historical scholarship in the nineteenth century, it finally became clear that the dogmatic tradition of Christianity could not be separated from its ecclesiastical and sacramental elements. Catholicism was not, as the Reformers believed, the result of the apostasy of the mediæval Papacy; it was a continuous process of organic development which is as old as Christianity itself. And so the modern Protestant scholar, who admitted that Christianity and Catholicism were identical down to the age of the Reformation, that "the Christianity of the

apostolic age is itself incipient Catholicism, and that the Catholicising of Christianity begins immediately after the death of Jesus," was forced to reject the Reformation compromise. He was left with the choice of two alternatives—either to deny the organic unity of the whole development and to view Christianity as mere syncretism—"a varying compound of some of the best and some of the worst elements of Paganism and Judaism, moulded in practice by the innate character of certain peoples of the Western world,"¹ as Huxley puts it—or else to go back behind the early Church, behind even the New Testament, to the original purity of the gospel of Jesus.

This second alternative is the Liberal Protestant solution, and it is the logical conclusion of the appeal of the Reformers from the Church to the Bible and of their attempt to set up an abstract ideal of primitive Christianity against the historic reality of the Catholic Church. In the moral teaching of the Gospel and in the personality of "the historical Jesus" the Liberal Protestants believed that they had at last found a firm basis for a faith that should be purely ethical and religious without any contamination of metaphysics or theological speculation. This is what Harnack means when he says that the work of the Reformation is only completed when *faith cancels dogma*, and that the Reformation is the end of dogma as the Gospel was the end of the Law. The divorce of dogma

¹ T. H. Huxley, *Essays*, v., p. 142.

from intelligence that was inaugurated by the Reformers consummates itself in the dissolution of dogma itself in the interests of that moral pragmatism which is the essence of modern Protestantism. Christianity, it is said, is not a creed but a life; its sole criterion is the moral and social activity that it generates. And thus religion loses all contact with absolute truth and becomes merely an emotional justification for a certain standard of behaviour.

But this intensely subjective attitude to religion is no less inconsistent with a genuinely historical understanding of the Gospels than it is with theology or metaphysics. Liberal Protestantism selects those elements in the Gospel which appeal to the modern liberal mind, and disregards or rejects the uncompromising supernaturalism on which the ethical teaching of Jesus rests. It condemned the Catholic tradition for replacing the historical Jesus by a metaphysical abstraction—the incarnation of a Divine hypostasis—while its own interpretation was nothing but an ethical abstraction—the incarnation of the ideals of liberal humanitarianism.¹

¹ The following passage from Mr. C. E. M. Joad's *The Present and Future of Religion* (p. 43) is a typical if somewhat extreme example of this attitude. "For many men of advanced ideas, to-day, Christ is primarily a great preacher and teacher of conduct, expounding doctrines of compelling force and originality. As such he despises ritual and ceremony, and lays stress upon what men do. He is a communist and an internationalist, advocating the widening of the private family to include the whole family of mankind. He is humanitarian, denouncing punishment, crying for mercy instead of vengeance, and insisting, if only as a utilitarian measure, on counteracting evil, not with a contrary evil, but with good. Above all, he is a socialist, insisting on the organic conception

It was inevitable that the one-sidedness of the Liberal Protestant solution should produce a corresponding reaction, and at the beginning of this century advanced criticism turned abruptly to the opposite extreme. The eschatological school was inspired by a justifiable distrust of the Liberal tendency to interpret the life of Jesus in terms of modern thought and sentiment, and they were consequently led to depreciate the ethical element in the Gospel and to accentuate its catastrophic and apocalyptic character. In Dean Inge's words, "They stripped the figure of Jesus of all the attributes with which the devotion of centuries had invested it and have left us with a mild specimen of the Mahdi type, an apocalyptic dreamer whose message consisted essentially of predictions about the approaching catastrophic 'end of the age,' predictions which of course came to nothing."

Thus we are left with two contradictory solutions, neither of which affords any basis for an explanation of the emergence of Christianity in the form in which it is known to history. Hence it is not surprising that those, like Loisy, who have followed the path of criticism to its extreme conclusion, should have ended in the despairing scepticism of a completely negative theory of religious

of society, and affirming that we are members of one another in so intimate a sense that the misery and degradation of one are the misery and degradation of all." But "we realise regretfully that Christ's dream of a regenerated world is too lovely for the little minds that run the machine of instituted religion."

syncretism. But even in this final stage there is no finality. All the resources of comparative religion are at the disposal of the critic, and the figure of the historical Jesus disappears in an ever-changing mist of Oriental myths and Hellenistic mystery religions. Neo-Pythagoreanism, Orphism, Iranian soteriology, the mystery religions, Mandæanism: in each of them some scholar has found the key to the origins of Christianity, and each successive solution is equally convincing or unconvincing, for in this phantom world all things are shadows, and the shadows change their shape as the spectator changes his position.

We may well ask how it is that the relatively simple story of the birth of Christianity, concerning which, moreover, we possess fuller and more authentic documents than in the case of any other of the world religions, should have become involved in such a web of sophistication and misplaced ingenuity. And it would be incomprehensible were it not that the whole development has been conditioned from the outset by a series of *a priori* prejudices. The most obvious of them is the anti-metaphysical prejudice to which I referred in the last chapter—the refusal to admit the objective and autonomous character of religion and of spiritual reality, and the affirmation that everything in the world is *of the same colour*, as Renan puts it, and that there is no free spiritual principle in the universe apart from the will of man. Hence it becomes necessary not only to eliminate every supernatural element

in the Gospel and in the history of the Church, but, furthermore, to deny the essential originality and spontaneity of Christianity and to explain it away as a composite development derived from elements that were already in existence.

This prejudice has had an incalculable influence on the modern mind, since it could invoke the prestige of "science," that is to say, the dogmatic conception of scientific materialism. But its influence might have been limited to rationalist circles had it not been reinforced by a second prejudice, which was based on religious preconceptions. This was the Protestant conviction that a vital breach had intervened between the Gospel of Jesus and the Faith of the Church. The Reformers, it is true, placed this breach as late as the Middle Ages, but, as we have seen, the growth of historical knowledge gradually increased the antiquity of the Catholic development until its origins became actually coterminous with the foundation of Christianity as an organised religion. Thus the way is laid open for the acceptance of the rationalist explanation of Christian origins, excluding only the person of Jesus and an ethical abstraction of His teaching, which are preserved as an isolated and unrelated ideal of spiritual religion that is to inspire the religious life of modern men.

The moral earnestness and erudition of the advocates of this view have caused its fundamental illogicality and its unhistorical character to be overlooked, and even at the

present day it enjoys enormous prestige, for it offers a *via media* between traditional Christianity and pure rationalism that appeals both to the Christian who has lost his faith in the dogmatic teaching of the Church and to the rationalist who has preserved a sense of religious values. It has recently found a distinguished adherent in Mr. Middleton Murry, who bases his own theory of religious naturalism on the personality and the religious ideal of Jesus. But Mr. Murry, at least, is more logical or more honest than his predecessors in that he does not claim the name of Christianity for his new religious ideal. On the contrary, he explicitly recognises the inseparable connection between the Christian religion and the Christian Church. "There is not," he writes, "and never will be any reconciliation between Christianity and the experimental method. Christianity is the great Church and nothing else is Christianity. To call anything else Christianity is to plunge into confusion and chaos; and it is an insult to Christianity. Christianity is a great thing, not a little one; one thing not many things; a rich thing not a poor thing; a majestic thing not a thing of shreds and patches. Christianity is Christianity at its noblest, truest and most comprehensive, and that is the Catholic Church. If you desire to be a Christian, join it. It will make no demands upon you that are more fearful than the demands made upon you by any peddling form of Christianity. It asks no greater sacrifice than Little Bethel or the Church of Eng-

land; and it does not insult your intelligence by inviting you to become a member of a contradiction in terms.”¹

But when we have reached this point there is no longer any reason for one who is not under the influence of rationalist or Protestant prejudices to refuse to admit that the historic faith and life of the Church were founded on the life and gospel of the historic Jesus. It is, in fact, only so that we can account for the creative originality of the Christian religion. A great spiritual unity like Christianity cannot be the accidental product of a series of misunderstandings. It must have had its origin in some great spiritual force; and where is this to be found if not in the life of that Person whom even the rationalist admits to have been the greatest and most original religious genius in the history of humanity?

And as soon as we set aside these *a priori* conceptions and approach the study of Christian origins with an open mind, the vital relation between the Church and the teaching of Jesus at once becomes manifest. Christianity did not arise *in vacuo* as an abstract theory of salvation, like Buddhism or the Gnostic sects; it was organically and consciously linked with a pre-existing historic religion; and this religion alone among the great faiths of the world was essentially based on the belief in a Holy Society. The One God had chosen for Himself one people and had bound it to Him by an eternal covenant. Israel was a

¹ J. Middleton Murry, *God*, p. 229.

theophoric community; not only a witness to the Divine unity but the bearer of the Divine purpose of mankind; for this little people "despised by man, the servant of rulers," was to be the source of a universal Kingdom of God, which should embrace all nations, and in which the creative purpose of God should find its ultimate fulfilment. Thus Israel was not a nation in the ordinary sense so much as a church, and the loss of political independence under the Roman Empire tended still further to accentuate its religious aspect. Faced by the universalism of the Roman world-power, the spiritual universalism of Israel acquired yet clearer consciousness, and the mind of the people was pre-occupied, as never before, by the hope of the coming of a Messianic deliverer who would break the power of the nations and set up the eternal kingdom of prophecy.

It was to those who lived in the expectation of this hope and "waited for the consolation of Israel" that the preaching of Jesus was addressed. His gospel consisted essentially in the announcement of the coming of the Kingdom; and this was not, as so many moderns hold, merely a figurative expression for an abstract ethical ideal; it was an absolutely realist conception of the coming of a new supernatural order—the culminating event in the history of Israel and of the world. So far the eschatological school is right; their error consists in their tendency to interpret this teaching in the spirit of the apocryphal

apocalypses rather than in that of the prophets, and in their depreciation of its spiritual and universal character. For the Kingdom of the gospels is not a national triumph of Israel over his foes; it is the mystical and spiritual reign of God in humanity. It is already immanent in the present order, which it is destined to transform and supersede—it is a leaven and a seed and a hidden treasure. It is open not to the Jews as such—the children of Abraham—nor to the Scribes and Pharisees, who observe meticulously all the outward prescriptions of the Mosaic law, but to the poor and the meek, the seekers after justice and those who follow the Son of Man in his sufferings and humiliation.

Nevertheless, the spirituality of the Kingdom does not imply that it was purely internal and individual. It retained the objective social character that it possessed in the prophetic tradition. It was to find its realisation in and through a community. But this community was no longer the national church-state of Jewish history; it was a new Messianic society—the “little flock” of which the gospels speak.¹ The mission of Jesus consisted essentially in the foundation of this society, not by doctrine alone, but by an act of creative power. Nothing can be further from the colourless Liberal picture of Jesus as a great moral idealist than the figure of the Son of Man in the Gospels, filled with the consciousness of his Messianic office and inaugurating a new supernatural dispensation by the New

¹ Luke xii. 32.

Covenant of his voluntary sacrifice. All the mythological parallels invoked by rationalist critics from the vegetation cults of primitive peoples and the mystery religions of the Hellenistic world sink into significance by the side of the profound spiritual reality of the words of Jesus, "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptised and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?", or of that great scene in the Upper Chamber, which only the most arbitrary preconceptions can remove from its place in the most ancient and authenticated documents of primitive Christianity.

Nor is it possible to deny that the actual beginnings of the historic Christian Church were rooted in this doctrine of a new order inaugurated by the Death and Resurrection of Jesus and incorporated in a spiritual society. The outpouring of the Spirit on the disciples at Pentecost was regarded as the fulfilment of prophecy and of the promises of Jesus to His apostles. For the possession of the Holy Spirit was the essential characteristic of the new society. It was, even more than Israel, a *theophoric* community, since it was the external organ of the Holy Spirit and enjoyed supernatural powers and authority. And at the same time the early Christians preserved the historical associations and the social self-consciousness of the Jewish tradition; they felt themselves to be a true people, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." Such a conception is almost incomprehensible to the modern

mind, which has become accustomed to treat religion as a matter for the individual conscience, and it is not surprising that Protestant thinkers, such as Dean Inge, should repudiate the very idea of the existence of an objective supernatural society.¹ But there is not the shadow of a doubt that the early Christians believed in it with an intense conviction and devotion as the very centre and ground of their faith. To Hermas, the Roman prophet, the Church is the first-born of creatures, and it is for her sake that the world itself was made.² As Christ is the New Adam the Church is the New Eve, the mother of the new humanity. And this mystical conception of the Church was in no way inconsistent with a strict insistence on its corporate authority and discipline. Although the eyes of the Christian were fixed on the future glory of the Kingdom of Christ rather than on the present order of things, this future kingdom was organically connected with the visible hierarchical Church, in the same way that the Messianic kingdom of prophecy was associated with the historic Israel. Indeed the Church was itself the future kingdom in embryo. In the vision of Hermas it is a tower, which is being built of living stones brought from every

¹ In *Christian Ethics and Modern Problems*, p. 138, he quotes a passage from Landor, which perfectly expresses this modern idea of religion as essentially a private matter. "Religion," says Landor, "is too pure for corporations. It is best meditated on in our privacy and best acted on in our ordinary intercourse with mankind." But Landor is a Deist rather than a Christian.

² Hermas, *Vision* iv, p. 1; cf. II. *Clement*, xiv., 1, 2.

quarter of the earth and thus the process of its construction is, in Newman's phrase, *the measure of the duration of the world*.

This faith in a holy society and in a historical process of redemption distinguished Christianity from all its religious rivals in the ancient world, and gave it the militant and unyielding quality that enabled it to triumph in its struggle with secular civilisation. But this is not sufficient to explain its religious appeal. If it had been nothing more than this, it would have merely a Jewish heresy or an apocalyptic sect of the type that we actually find in Ebionism or Montanism. But in addition to the social and historical side of its teaching, Christianity also brought a new doctrine of God and a new relation of the human soul to Him. Judaism had been the least mystical and the least metaphysical of religions. It revealed God as the Creator, the Lawgiver and the Judge, and it was by obedience to His Law and by the ritual observances of sacrifice and ceremonial purity that man entered into relations with Him. But the transformation by Jesus of the national community into a new universal spiritual society brought with it a corresponding change in the doctrine of God. God was no longer the national deity of the Jewish people, localised, so to speak, at Sinai and Jerusalem. He was the Father of the human race, the Universal Ground of existence "in Whom we live and move and are." And when St. Paul appealed to the testimony of the Stoic poet, he

recognized that Christianity was prepared to accept the metaphysical inheritance of Hellenic thought as well as the historic revelation of Jewish prophecy.

This is shown still more clearly in St. John's identification of the Logos and the Messiah in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel. Jesus of Nazareth was not only the Christ, the Son of the Living God; He was also the Divine Intelligence, the Principle of the order and intelligibility of the created world. Thus the opposition between the Greek ideal of spiritual intuition and the Living God of Jewish revelation—an opposition that Philo had vainly attempted to surmount by an artificial philosophical synthesis—finally disappeared before the new revelation of the Incarnate Word. As St. Augustine has said, the Fourth Gospel is essentially the Gospel of contemplation, for while the first three evangelists are concerned with the external mission of Jesus as Messianic King and Saviour and teach the active virtues of Christian life, St. John is, above all, "the theologian" who declares the mysteries of the Divine Nature and teaches the way of contemplation.¹ Jesus is the bridge between Humanity and Divinity. In Him God is not only manifested to man, but vitally participated. He is the Divine Light, which illuminates men's minds, and the Divine Life, which transforms human nature and makes it the partaker of Its own supernatural activity.

¹ *de Consensu Evangelistarum* i., cap 3-5.

Hence the insistence of the Fourth Gospel on the sacramental element in Christ's teaching,¹ since it is through the sacraments that the Incarnation of the Divine Word is no longer merely a historical fact, but is brought into vital and sensible contact with the life of the believer. So far from being an alien magical conception superimposed from without upon the religion of the Gospel, it forms the very heart of Christianity, since it is only through the sacramental principle that the Jewish ideal of an external ritual cult becomes transformed into a worship of spiritual communion. The modern idea that sacramentalism is inconsistent with the "spiritual" or mystical element in religion, is as lacking in foundation as the allied belief in an opposition between religion and theology. It is only when we reduce theology to religious rationalism and spiritual religion to a blend of ethics and emotion that there is no place left for sacramentalism; but under these conditions genuine mysticism and metaphysical truth equally disappear. Each of them forms an essential element in the historical development of Christianity. In the great age of creative theological thought, the development of dogma was organically linked with sacramentalism and mysticism. They were three aspects of a single reality—the great mystery of the restoration, illumination and deification of humanity by the Incarnation of the Divine Word. This is clearly recognised by Ritschl and his followers such as

¹ *E.g.*, John iii., 5; vi., 32-58.

Harnack, although they involve mysticism, sacramentalism and scientific theology in a common condemnation.

Nevertheless, their criticism of the development of Greek Christianity is not entirely unjustified, for the historical and social elements, on which Ritschl laid so exclusive an emphasis, form an integral part of the Christian tradition, and apart from them the mystical or metaphysical side of religion becomes sterile or distorted. The tendency of the Byzantine mind to concentrate itself on this aspect of Christianity did actually lead to a decline in moral energy and in the spiritual freedom and initiative of the Church, and Eastern Christianity has tended to become an absolute static religion of the Oriental type.

It is true that this ideal, since it is a purely religious one, has much more in common with Catholic Christianity than have the secularised ideals of modern European culture. Catholicism and Orientalism stand together against the denial of metaphysical reality and of the primacy of the spiritual, which is the fundamental Western error. As Sir Charles Eliot has truly said, "The opposition is not so much between Indian thought and the New Testament . . . the fundamental contrast is rather between both India and the New Testament, on the one hand, and, on the other, the rooted conviction of European races, however much orthodox Christianity may disguise their expression of it, that this world is all-important. The conviction finds expression not only in the avowed pursuit of plea-

sure and ambition, but in such sayings as that the best religion is the one that does most good, and in such ideals as self-realisation or the full development of one's motive and powers. Though monasteries and monks still exist, the great majority of Europeans instinctively disbelieve in asceticism, the contemplative life and contempt of the world." ¹

And yet, for all this, there is no getting over the profound differences that separate Christianity from the purely metaphysical and intuitive type of religion.

Against the Oriental religions of pure spirit, which denied the value and even the reality of the material universe, the Church has undeviatingly maintained its faith in a historical revelation that involved the consecration not only of humanity but even of the body itself. This was the great stumbling-block to the Oriental mind, which readily accepted the idea of an Avatar or of the theophany of a divine Aeon, but could not face the consequences of the Catholic doctrine of the Two Natures and the full humanity of the Logos made flesh. This conception of the Incarnation as the bridge between God and Man, the marriage of Heaven and Earth, the channel through which the material world is spiritualised and brought back to unity, distinguishes Christianity from all the other Oriental religions, and involves a completely new attitude to life. Deliverance is to be obtained not by a sheer disregard of

¹ C. Eliot, *Hindusim and Buddhism*, Vol. I., p. ix.

physical existence and a concentration of the higher intellect on the contemplation of pure Being, but by a creative activity that affects every part of the composite nature of man. And this activity is embodied in a definite society, which shares in the divine life of the Spirit, while at the same time it belongs to the visible order of social and historical reality.

Thus Catholic Christianity occupies an intermediate position between the two spiritual ideals and the two conceptions of reality which have divided the civilised world and the experience of humanity. To the West its ideals appear mystical and other-worldly, while in comparison with the Oriental religions it stands for historical reality and moral activity. It is a stranger in both camps and its home is everywhere and nowhere, like man himself, whose nature maintains a perilous balance between the worlds of spiritual and sensible reality, to neither of which it altogether belongs. Yet by reason of this ambiguous position the Catholic Church stands as the one mediator between East and West, between the ideal of spiritual intuition and that of moral and social activity. She alone possesses a tradition that is capable of satisfying the whole of human nature and that brings the transcendent reality of spiritual Being into relation with human experience and the realities of social life.

IV

CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEW ORDER

It is clear from what has gone before that Christianity is not to be identified either with ethical idealism or with metaphysical intuition. It is a creative spiritual force, which has for its end nothing less than the recreation of humanity. The Church is no sect or human organisation, but a new creation—the seed of the new order which is ultimately destined to transform the world. Such, at least, is the Catholic belief, and though the non-Catholic may deny the reality of this faith and the supernatural character of this life, he cannot shut his eyes to the fact that they have actually had a profound influence on the course of history and have been one of the main sources of the spiritual achievement of European civilisation. For, notwithstanding the materialism and secularism that have always been present in our culture, and which to-day seem everywhere triumphant, that achievement has been perhaps the most remarkable that the world has ever known. Europe is not a true racial or geographical unity; it is, in its essence, a spiritual community, and even its vast material expansion in modern times would have been impos-

sible without the moral force and spiritual inspiration that it owes ultimately to the Christian faith.

However secularised a civilisation may become, it can never entirely escape from the burden of its spiritual inheritance. Péguy has said of the Jews that they are a people which has no natural love of spiritual adventures. They ask only to be left alone, like other peoples, to dwell in their own land, to grow rich and to enjoy the good things of life. But the prophetic destiny with which their religion has charged them has forced them time after time against their will to leave their comfortable security and to go out into exile and the wilderness. And the same thing is true of Christendom: it cannot escape from the contagion of the divine fire that has been kindled in its midst.

Why is it that Europe alone among the civilisations of the world has been continually shaken and transformed by an energy of spiritual unrest that refuses to be content with the unchanging law of social tradition which rules the Oriental cultures? It is because its religious ideal has not been the worship of timeless and changeless perfection, but a spirit that strives to incorporate itself in humanity and to change the world. In the West the spiritual power has not been immobilised in a sacred social order like the Confucian State in China or the Indian caste system. It has acquired social freedom and autonomy, and consequently its activity has not been limited to the reli-

gious sphere but has had far-reaching effects on every aspect of social and intellectual life.

These secondary results are not necessarily of religious or moral value from the Christian point of view, for they may be deflected and distorted by the social medium through which they pass or contaminated by materialism and selfishness. But the fact remains that they are secondary and dependent on the existence of a spiritual force, without which they either would not have been or would have been utterly different.

For example, the Industrial Revolution, which appears at first sight one of the most materialistic aspects of Western civilisation, would have been impossible without the moral earnestness and sense of duty that were generated by the Puritan ideal—an ideal far removed from that of Catholic Christianity, but one that owed its existence to a one-sided and sectarian interpretation of the Christian tradition.

And this is true also of the Renaissance and the humanist culture, in spite of the secularism and naturalism which seem so characteristic of them. The more one studies the origin of humanism the more one is brought to recognise the importance of an element which is not only spiritual, but definitely Christian. The old conception of the Renaissance as a revival of paganism—an idea which was popularised by nineteenth-century writers such as Burckhardt and J. A. Symonds—is to-day rejected not only by philoso-

phers like Berdyaev, but by historians and critics, such as Karl Burdach and Giuseppe Toffanin. The Renaissance had its origin not only in the recovery of classical antiquity, but in the mystical humanism of St. Francis and Dante. The element survives in the later Renaissance in such representative figures as Francesco Pico and Marsilio Ficino, Botticelli and Michelangelo, Sadoletto and Tasso; and it finds a clear expression in the poems of Campanella, above all in his great canzone "Della possanza dell' uomo," in which the purely humanist ideal of man's power and glory is united with the Christian conception of the Divine Humanity.

It may be said that this is only one aspect and that not the most important of the humanist movement. But even the purely naturalistic achievements of the Renaissance were dependent on its Christian antecedents. Humanism was, it is true, a return to nature, the rediscovery of man and the natural world. But the author of the discovery, the active principle in the change, was not the natural man; it was Christian man, the human type that had been produced by ten centuries of ascetic discipline and intensive cultivation of the inner life. The great men of the Renaissance were spiritual men, even when they were most deeply immersed in the temporal order. It was from the accumulated resources of their Christian past that they acquired the spiritual energy to conquer the material world and to create the new secular culture. It is true that the

disparity between the source and the object of their activity tended to produce a sense of strain and spiritual tension, which is perceptible in the work of typical Renaissance geniuses such as Shakespeare and Cervantes, as well as in definitely religious characters like Michelangelo or Campanella. But, at least in Catholic Europe, the two elements had attained to a relatively stable equilibrium by the end of the sixteenth century, and had an equal share in the development of the later Renaissance culture. The spirit of Christian humanism dominated the whole of the seventeenth century and manifested itself alike in the Baroque art of Spain and Italy and Central Europe, in the Jacobean and Caroline literature of England and in the classical culture of France. This religious current which runs through seventeenth-century culture cannot be set aside as a reactionary or negative phenomenon, for it lies at the heart of the higher civilisation of the time and is responsible for some of its greatest achievements. Indeed, when in the eighteenth century this equilibrium was destroyed by the final victory of the naturalistic and rationalist tendencies, it involved the fall of the Renaissance culture itself. The new humanism of the Enlightenment was lacking in the vitality and spiritual depth of the earlier type. The one-sided rationalism of the Encyclopædists provoked the one-sided subjective emotionalism of Rousseau and the Romantics. And though both rationalism and romanticism were in a sense the heirs of the Renaissance

tradition, neither of them was the true representative of the earlier humanism. Rationalism had lost its spiritual inspiration and romanticism lacked its intellectual order and its sense of form.

Thus the disappearance of the Christian element in humanism has involved the loss of its vital quality. If we attempt to resuscitate it on a purely naturalistic foundation, we may get something like the humanism of Anatole France, but we shall certainly not recover the creative humanism of the Renaissance period. This is admitted by the protagonist of the new humanism, Professor Babbitt, who fully realises that every culture is a spiritual order and that humanism is only possible if we throw over naturalism and return to spiritual principles. But, while he recognises that the very survival of Western civilisation depends "on the appearance of leaders who have re-discovered in some form the truths of the inner life and repudiated the errors of naturalism," he is unwilling to make a complete return to the metaphysical and religious foundations. He prefers a kind of spiritual positivism based on the accumulated moral wisdom of the great historic traditions—Greek, Buddhist and Confucian. His desire to be "modern and individualistic and critical" causes him to shrink from committing himself absolutely to that which is eternal and universal.

Yet without such an affirmation, no true spiritual order is possible. Each of the great spiritual traditions to which

he appeals rested on a metaphysical foundation, and if this is removed their moral order falls with it. Even Epicurus himself had to pass beyond the "*flammantia mœnia mundi*" before he could bring peace to the minds of his disciples. By his insistence on the critical and individualistic attitude, Professor Babbitt is taking his stand on the weakest point in his position. The tradition of critical individualism still survives; indeed the modern intellectual has carried it to its extreme limits. But this excess is a last desperate reaction against the all-pervading pressure of a collectivist civilisation. In the days of Voltaire the critic was leading a victorious advance against the routed forces of the old order; to-day he is fighting for his very existence against the ruling tendencies of the age. It is easier to restore a spiritual purpose to civilisation than to reverse its tendency towards collectivism and solidarity. To a critic like Babbitt, Christianity is unacceptable on account of its weakness during the last two centuries against the dissolvent forces of rationalist criticism; but this type of criticism is already losing its power. The modern criticism of organised religion is in part the survival on a lower cultural plane of the rationalist thought of a past age, and in part a reaction against the romantic and individualist forms of religion that were characteristic of the nineteenth century or at least of the post-Reformation period. But Christianity in itself is in no way bound up with the individualist culture that is passing away. It was in origin a religion of

order and solidarity which throve in an atmosphere of anonymity and collectivism. It was not itself responsible for the dying down of classical culture, the loss of civic liberty and the inauguration of the régime of compulsion and state socialism, which were, on the contrary, the necessary consequences of the inherent inconsistencies and weakness of the later classical culture itself. But it was able to accommodate itself to conditions in which a purely secular type of individual culture must inevitably perish.

And it seems possible that Christianity may survive modern humanism in the same way that it survived ancient Hellenism. However seriously Christianity is threatened by the materialism and mechanicism of modern civilisation, it is in a much stronger position than the tradition of critical intellectualism, which can find neither a material nor a spiritual basis in the new conditions of life. The latter belongs essentially to the culture of a leisured class—not the new plutocracy of millionaires and leaders of industry, but the privileged classes of the old Europe, whether bourgeois or aristocratic, who stood outside the economic arena. This class has already practically disappeared, and its civilisation and ideals of life are bound to disappear in like manner. The choice that is actually before us is not between an individualistic humanism and some form of collectivism, but between a collectivism that is purely mechanistic and one that is spiritual. Spiritual individualism is incapable of standing out against the col-

lectivism and standardisation of modern life: it is only by a return to spiritual solidarity that modern civilisation can recover the spiritual principle of which it stands so greatly in need.

It will no doubt be objected, by the modernist and the mediævalist alike, that there is a fundamental and insurmountable contradiction between the Christian ideal of spiritual freedom and the scientific determinism and materialism that are inherent in the new order. But we must make a distinction between the metaphysical determinism of the dogmatic materialist or "naturalist" and the physical laws within their proper limits. And what is this but the Hellenic belief in the existence of a universal cosmic order, which was accepted by the Christian Fathers as a necessary consequence of the creative activity of the Divine Word, which orders and disposes all things in number and weight and measure?

Consequently the material organisation of the world by science and invention is in no sense to be refused or despised by the Catholic tradition, for to the Catholic philosopher no less than to the scientist the progressive *rationalisation* of matter by the work of scientific intelligence is the natural vocation of the human mind. This must seem a hard saying when we consider that science and discovery, like a second eating of the forbidden fruit of knowledge, have proved a curse rather than a blessing to humanity. But the disease of modern civilisation lies

neither in science nor in machinery, but in the false philosophy with which they have been associated. At the very moment that man was at last acquiring control over his material environment, he was abandoning the ideal of spiritual order and leaving the new economic forces to develop uncontrolled without any higher social direction. Economic activity was no longer regarded as a function of society as a whole, but as an independent world in which the only laws were the purely economic ones of supply and demand, and of the relations between population and capital. Money and commodities were not considered in relation to social life, but became hypostatized into abstract principles on which social life was dependent.

But though these ideas accompanied the rise of the machine order, they are in reality profoundly inconsistent with that order and with the scientific genius, and to-day they are either dead or in the process of dissolution. It is now generally recognised—even by those who attach no importance to spiritual values—that the machine order involves social direction and that it is absurd to build up an elaborate artificial mechanism of production and to leave society itself at the mercy of private acquisitiveness. This was first clearly realised by the Socialists, and to-day Communism claims to be the only social theory that is consistent with the new scientific order. But Communism is itself a result of the same pseudo-scientific rationalism which produced the doctrine of Ricardo, and it gained con-

sistency only by carrying the false principles of the older theory to their extreme conclusion. The old economists had excluded human values from economic life, but they had not attempted to deny them entirely. Outside business hours "the economic man" was free to behave as a human being. But to the Communist no such dualism is possible. The economic life absorbs the whole man and the whole society. The political, intellectual and spiritual aspects of life are all subordinated to the economic end, which alone is absolute and consequently is the only ethical criterion. Thus man becomes the servant and not the master of the machine, since society exists for economic production and man exists for society.

But the history of Communism is itself sufficient to disprove this materialistic conception of history. For Communism was not the spontaneous product of impersonal economic forces. It had its origin in the mind of that atrabilious arch-individualist, Karl Marx, and the forces that inspired him were neither of the economic nor the material order. It was the instinct of spiritual self-assertion, the revolutionary ideal of abstract justice, and perhaps more than all the ineradicable Jewish faith in an apocalyptic deliverance that drove him from his own country and the interests of his bourgeois career to a life of exile and privation. Thus Communism, like every other living power in the world of men, owes its existence to spiritual forces. If it were possible to eliminate these, as the Communist

theory demands, and to reduce human life to a purely economic activity, mankind would sink back into barbarism and animality. For the creative element in human culture is spiritual, and it triumphs only by mortifying and conquering the natural conservatism of man's animal instincts. This is true above all of science, for the path of the scientist leads him further from the animal than the rest of men. He lives not in the concrete reality of sensible experience, like the animal or the savage, but in a rarefied atmosphere of mathematical abstraction in which the ordinary man cannot breathe. If the materialist interpretation of history were true, the scientific intellectualisation of nature could no more have arisen than could the metaphysical intuition of reality, and without science there could be no machine order. The true Marxian Communism is not that of a machine order which is the work of the creative scientific spirit, but rather that of the Eskimo, which is the direct product of economic necessity. For the machine is a proof not of the subordination of mind to matter, but of the subordination of matter to mind. So far from necessitating the substitution of material for spiritual order, it is itself a vindication of spiritual order, since it frees man from his age-long *animal* condition of dependence on nature and material circumstance.

But if the scientific order is to realise this ideal, it must be related to spiritual ends and must form part of a wider spiritual order. Material organisation alone is incapable of

saving civilisation. Left to itself it may easily become a destructive force which is hostile alike to spiritual values and to human freedom. True civilisation is essentially a spiritual order, and its criterion is not material wealth, but spiritual vision. It seeks a *Theoria*—an intuition of reality which is expressed in metaphysical thought and bears fruit in artistic creation and moral action. Thus Chinese civilisation culminates in the metaphysical vision of cosmic law and in the ethical ideal of the Confucian just man; Indian civilisation in the metaphysical vision of absolute being and in the moral ideal of the Sadhu; and Hellenic civilisation in the vision of the intelligible world and in the ethical ideal of the philosopher.

In Christianity the idea of spiritual order acquires a yet wider and more profound significance. It is based upon the belief in a divine society which transcends all states and cultures and is the final goal of humanity. For as a modern Thomist has written, "The human personality is not entirely contained in political society; it belongs above all by its innermost and truest being, by its spiritual element, to another and more perfect society, to the universality of being, the World-Whole which includes the living Infinite, God Himself, as its Universal Good and Sovereign Head; and political society, however wide and numerous it may be, is but a minute section of this immense and innumerable Republic,"¹ this city of God of

¹ T. Bésiade, *La Justice générale*, in *Mélanges thomistes*, 1923, p. 334.

which St. Augustine and St. Thomas speak. This society exists in the nature of things as "the republic of all men under the law of God,"¹ although the actual disorder of human nature prevented its effective realisation by man. It has therefore been reconstituted on a higher plane by the Incarnation, through which mankind is united in a direct and personal relation with the Divine Word. And this new unity is something more than a society; it is an organism, a living body whose head is Christ the Word and whose vital principle is the Divine Spirit. "But this great society is not yet made; it is in the making—in process of becoming—it grows under the guidance of Christ, Whose mystical Body has not yet attained its full stature, to its immanent perfection, that is to say, to the perfect possession of God; it is a universal gravitation towards God 'Who turns all things to the love of Himself.' . . .

"And it depends on us to push the universe with all our powers towards its sublime destiny, to contribute in our degree and for our part to the promotion and perfection of the kingdom of God."²

If this is the idea that should inspire Christian culture, it may well be asked whether a Christian civilisation has ever existed. It is surely not to be found in the theocratic absolutism of the Byzantine East, nor in the feudal barbarism of the mediæval West, nor in the humanism of the Renais-

¹ St. Thomas, *Sum. Th.* i-ii, q. 100, a. 5.

² Bésiade, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

sance. Yet through all their manifold imperfections each of them has aspired to it in their fashion, and if our own civilisation is to recover a spiritual principle, it is here that we must seek it. The essential achievement of our culture—the conquest of material order—is not, as we have seen, inconsistent with this ideal. In fact it may be regarded as its natural complement, for the restoration of man to his true position as the master of nature and the organiser of the material world, which is the function of science, corresponds in the natural order to the spiritual restoration of human nature in itself, which is the work of Christianity in the supernatural order.

In a Christian civilisation the scientific order would no longer offer, as it does at present, the tragic spectacle of vast resources of power and intelligence devoted to producing unsightly and unnecessary objects and to endowing mankind with new means of self-destruction; it would become an instrument for the realisation of man's true destiny as the orderer of material things to spiritual ends. And so, too, with regard to the international aspects of our civilisation. Without spiritual order the cosmopolitanism of modern culture does not make for peace; it merely increases the opportunities of strife. It destroys all that is best and most distinctive in the local and national cultures, while leaving the instincts of national and racial hostility to develop unchecked. It unites mankind in the common enjoyment of the cinema and the Ford car and the machine

gun without creating any spiritual unity. The recovery of the Christian idea of order would give a spiritual expression to the universality of modern culture. Its material unification would become subservient to the ideal of the spiritual unity of mankind in justice and charity, an ideal that has a very real attraction for the modern mind, but which secular idealism is powerless to achieve.

We must make our choice between the material organisation of the world—based either on economic exploitation or on an economic absolutism, which absorbs the whole of life and leaves no room for human values—and the Christian ideal of a spiritual order based on spiritual faith and animated by charity, which is the spiritual will. The triumph of such an ideal in a world that seems governed only by material forces and distracted by hatred and greed may seem a fantastic dream, but is it any more hopeless than the enterprise of that handful of unknown and uneducated men from a remote Oriental province who set out to conquer the imperial power of Rome and the intellectual culture of Hellenism? In history it is often the incredible that happens—*credo quia impossibile* has been justified again and again. Sooner or later it is inevitable that men's minds should turn once more in search of spiritual reality, and when once the tide begins to flow all the sand-castles that we have built during the ebb disappear.

Every Christian mind is a seed of change so long as it is a living mind, not enervated by custom or ossified by preju-

dice. A Christian has only to *be* in order to change the world, for in that act of being there is contained all the mystery of supernatural life. It is the function of the Church to sow this divine seed, to produce not merely good men, but spiritual men—that is to say, supermen. In so far as the Church fulfils this function it transmits to the world a continuous stream of spiritual energy. If the salt itself loses its savour, then indeed the world sinks back into disorder and death, for a despiritualised Christianity is powerless to change anything; it is the most abject of failures, since it serves neither the natural nor the spiritual order. But the life of the Church never fails, since it possesses an infinite capacity for regeneration. It is the external organ through which the Spirit enters the social process and builds up a new humanity—*populus qui nasetur quem fecit Dominus*. The spirit breathes and they are created and the face of the earth is renewed.

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